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ESSAY ON ENGRAVED GEMS.

[Continued from p. 160.]

IF the artists of antiquity did not always receive the due reward of their labours, their meed of praise, or that personal attention which their respective merits might deserve,—their works, among those who had the good sense and the good taste to appreciate them, never failed of being estimated in the highest degree. The discovery or possession of a work of art, of itself alone conferred an honour, and its name became by tacit agreement united with the possessor's;—as, the Venus de Medicis, the Farnese Hercules, the Barbarini Vase, &c. At length it became customary for the possessors of valuable and scarce gems to introduce their names in whole or in part upon them; and thus we find one of Apollo and Maryas marked *LAVR. MED.*, being that of Lorenzo de Medicis.

The most illustrious men of antiquity had so great a regard for their collections of gems, that they sometimes left them to the public to preserve them entire. Pompey placed in the Capitol the gems he found among the treasures of Mithridates; Cæsar consecrated and gave to the temple of Venus Genitrix his cabinet of gems, which he had collected at immense expense; and Marcellus and others made similar dedications. A further illustration of their use, and the value set upon them, may be found in the Introduction to the work entitled "Select Gems from the Antique," published 1804.

Julius Cæsar had for his seal, Venus armed with a Dart, of which we have numerous copies. This was to flatter his pride of ancestry, he pretending that he was descended from Venus and Æneas.—Augustus, when he assumed the empire, had a Sphinx, which at length he abandoned to elude the pleasantries of the wits: this Sphinx (they said)

portends riddles. He afterwards adopted the Head of Alexander, and at length his own portrait, engraved by Dioscorides.—Pompey's seal was a Lion holding a Sword : and when after his death it was presented to Cæsar, the feeling or the crafty rival burst into tears.—The seal of Mæcenas was a Frog; which, as it was usually annexed to his tax bills, rendered the animal an object of terror to the people, and made its hoarse croaking a sound peculiarly harsh and unmusical.

One of the principal pleasures as well as advantages that arise from the study of engraved gems, is the variety of subjects they embrace and the information they communicate. In them we not only see the progressive state of the Fine Arts, but are made acquainted with the manners and customs of past ages, with the poetry of their inventions in allegories and devices. By them the portraits of their sages, kings and heroes, together with all the illustrious in every class,—poets, historians, and artists,—to say nothing of the fanciful features and forms of their Divinities, the beau-ideal of the graceful and of the grand,—have been conveyed to us through the medium of Gems and the casts from them. These portable documents of the usages of times past, copies from statues, bas-reliefs, &c. were, in the place of engraved prints, extending the knowledge of the subjects they embraced to the remotest ends of the earth, and to the latest posterity.

To the ignorance of the dark ages, and more particularly of the monks, the preservation of many of these beautiful remains is greatly owing. As subjects of paganism or illustrations of the heathen mythology, they would no doubt have been destroyed; but valuable as gems and precious stones, they were enshrined in relics of monkish superstition, and became the ornaments of the shrine and of the decorations of the altar.

The study of Gems has also opened a wide field of conjecture to the curious in antiquarian lore; the *what* and the *who* have set many learned heads to work; accidents or mutilations of the work have given rise to seeming resemblances, and discussions on scratches; and marks have divided or amused the learned, as the fancy or ingenuity of the contending parties has been brought to bear upon the subject. An instance of this fanciful kind may be seen in the Head of Minerva already alluded to, where a cow and her calf are supposed to be designed beneath the helmet at the back part of the head; but the probability is, these marks are either accidents or the flowing hair of the goddess. Raspe, in his account in *Tassie's Catalogue*, simply states, "In the field a cow and a calf;" without once venturing a comment why or wherefore they should be anyways connected with the head of

Minerva; it is certainly no ordinary appendage, and if not merely accidental, would be a very curious ground for conjecture and remark*.

The advantages to art and artists to be derived from the forms and subjects found on gems, may be seen in the designs of Raphael and M. Angelo, and more or less by the great masters of the Italian and almost every other school of painting. Indeed they may be considered as a common stock, by which every artist may assist his invention and improve his taste. As one out of many instances in modern art that might be adduced to show the way in which gems have suggested both subject and form to the painter, it need only be necessary to mention one, of which there is a print engraved by Bartolozzi, after a picture by the late R. Cosway, R.A. The subject is called Love and Innocence—we believe the portraits of some nobleman's children; and the gem or cast which furnished the artist with the design will be found in Mr. Tassie's Collection, No. 7196, under the name of "Cupid and Anteros," but more probably the Twins, one of the signs in the zodiac.

The painting is circular, and was, at the time of its being exhibited at Somerset House, placed in the centre of the mantel of the great room, and exhibited the taste and talents of Cosway in no ordinary degree; and his application of the figures on the gem was no less calculated to show his skill in the choice and appropriation.

Gems, as themes for the poet and the exercise of his powers, afford a various and ample field; nor is he shackled by the conjectures of the learned on the nature of the subject, but follows at once the suggestions of his fancy, and gives to its character a locality and a sentiment no less exalted than striking and appropriate.

As examples of the way in which both power and talent have been displayed in the illustration of gems, we may perhaps be allowed to give a variety to our pages by quoting, from a recent publication, the following lines by the Rev. Dr. Croly. We take those on a Gem which represents "A Woman contemplating a household God."

Domestic love! not in proud palace halls
Is often seen thy beauty to abide:
Thy dwelling is in lowly cottage walls,
That in the thicket of the woodbine hide;
With hum of bees around, and from the side
Of woody hills some little bubbling spring,
Shining along thro' banks with hare-bells dyed;

* As the field of conjecture is still open, an opinion of these uncertain forms is still ventured, and we think upon equally good grounds, that it may be Remus and Romulus, for the imagined animal has as much the form of a wolf as a cow.

And many a bird to warble on the wing,
When Morn her saffron robe o'er heaven and earth doth fling.

O! love of loves!—to thy white hand is given
Of earthly happiness the golden key!
Thine are the joyous hours of winter's even,
When the babes cling around their father's knee;
And thine the voice, that on the midnight sea
Melts the rude mariner with thoughts of home,
Peopling the gloom with all he longs to see.
Spirit! I've built a shrine; and thou hast come,
And on its altar clos'd—for ever clos'd thy plume.

It will not be necessary to point out to the intelligent reader the soft yet brilliant images that pass through the mind conveyed by these lines; but it may be proper to show the way in which it is described in the Catalogue already alluded to. "No. 11,016. Amethyst. King of France, convex (Mariette, No. 104). Said to be Caliphurnia the wife of Cæsar, consulting the Penates on the fate of Cæsar, who contrary to her advice went to the Senate the day he was assassinated. Or rather a very fine woman in a veil, sitting and meditating before a cippus with attention. Let us observe, she has a fan in the shape of a leaf in her right hand; and yet it would be presumptuous in us, like other antiquarian visionaries, to form conjectures of the name and meditations of this beautiful devotee."

From this it will be readily seen, when the subject on the gem is uncertain in its character, how much is owing to the powers of the poet in its illustration, beyond the conjectures of the antiquary. Another example of the like advantage on the side of the poet, we will take from the writer before cited. It is called "Genius bound," in the publication mentioned above.

Glorious Spirit! at whose birth
Joy might fill the conscious earth;
Yet her joy be dash'd with fear,
As at untold danger near;
A comet rising on his gloom,
Or to light her, or consume!

Beauty is upon thy brow!
Such sad beauty as the bow,
Child of shower and sunbeam, wears
Waked and vanishing, in tears;
Yet to its splendid moment given
Colours only lit by heaven.

Thou canst take the lightning's wings,
And see the deep forbidden things;

With thy starry sandals tread
On the ocean's treasure bed ;
Or make the rolling clouds thy throne ;
Height and depth to thee are one !

Prophet Spirit ! thou canst sweep
Where the unborn nations sleep ;
Or from the ancient ages shroud
To judgement call their sceptred crowd :
Earth has to thee nor birth, nor tomb—
Nor past, nor present, nor to come.

Yet here thou sitt'st, while earth and heaven
Are to thy radiant empire given.
Alas ! I see the manacle !—
And all thy soul has felt the steel ;
Thy wing of fire, thy beauty, vain—
For Genius dies beneath the chain.

The gem which gave the subject for these beautiful lines, represents a figure seated ; it has wings, and the hands are bound behind. In the Catalogue it is called a Victory ; which, unless it be allowed that Victory can become a captive, seems highly inappropriate ; but as Genius in bondage becomes an apt and beautiful symbol.

Other effusions of the Muse have been called forth from the subjects on gems ; and none of more beauty and elegance than those from the pen of Miss L. E. Landon, and which have appeared in the *Literary Gazette*.

From what has already been said, it will appear, that the antiquary, the artist, the poet, and the man of letters, may derive advantage from the study of Engraved Gems ; where an ample field of inquiry opens to the view, embracing all that belongs to the Classics of the early ages ; their mythology, divinities, religious ceremonies, their triumphs, trophies, allegories, devices, masks and theatricals, together with the portraits of the most eminent men of antiquity, kings, heroes, sages, philosophers, and poets.

Many of these subjects, originating from Engraved Gems, have been treated at great length in disquisitions, which, if they did not always arrive at satisfactory conclusions, served to exercise the imagination, or stimulate to further inquiries. Among such as have come under this description, few have exercised the fancy more actively than a gem which goes under the name of Michael Angelo's Seal :—this, as Raspe observes, “ has furnished ample matter of discussion and controversy to the antiquaries of France, (it being in the possession of the King of France). One might almost form a library of the books and

pamphlets which have been published upon the beauty and signification of this celebrated trifle."

The subject is apparently a Vintage; and though its dimensions as an oval, lengthways, does not exceed three quarters of an inch, it contains no less than fifteen figures, which, as well as the composition, are in the best style of Art. After enumerating other matters connected with authors and their opinions on the subject of the gem, Raspe goes on to state, that "most commentators agree, without any proof whatever, that it is the work of Pyrgoteles, a very celebrated engraver in the time of Alexander the Great." Unhappily for them, and for M. Theirbreim in particular, M. De Murr, in his *Bibliothèque des beaux Arts*, has most justly observed, upon some Italian antiquaries, that "The little fisherman fishing on the sea-shore, (in the *exergue*,) is a rebus, or speaking figure, expressing the name of PIETRO MARIA DI PESCIA, contemporary with MICHAEL ANGELO, and a most celebrated and excellent engraver." So much for the uncertainty of antiquarian researches. To those who examine the style and character of the figures on this gem, it will evidently appear that they have the grace and contour of the Italian school of the time of Raphael and M. Angelo, and they may further remark in them the more recent graces of Cipriani and Angelica Kauffman. The above gem appears in Mr. Tassie's Catalogue, under the No. 4373, "Cornelian. King of France."

Of nearly the same dimensions is No. 7630, "An Engagement of Cavalry on a Bridge and the Banks of a River." On this gem may be counted fifteen or sixteen figures, besides others in the distance beneath the bridge. Nothing can exceed the spirited action of men and horses, as well of those who are engaged upon, as those who are combating beneath the bridge.

Why this minute and ingenious work of art should be so slightly mentioned, may well be matter of surprise; its character and composition are deserving of great admiration, and the execution appears to warrant a belief in its high antiquity; which if fairly proved, might serve to show that it may have given the hint for the 'Battle of Constantine,' by Julio Romano, from a design by Raffaele. The resemblance it bears to the painting of the 'Battle of the Amazons,' may also without any great stretch of the imagination be supposed to have furnished Rubens with an idea for that celebrated picture.

There is also another gem whose beauty and antiquity appear to be undoubted; at all events of the first, its beauty, there can be no doubt. It appears in the before-mentioned Catalogue, under No. 6553, de-

signated "A bust of Cupid, crowned with myrtle, ivy, and rose-buds, with wings; his right hand in a bandage, as if stung by the bee of Anacreon. Gori makes this Acratus, the genius and companion of Bacchus, and observes very justly, that the right hand being wrapped up has a symbolical signification, proving by a passage in Livy, that the Flamen or high priest of Egeria, or Fidelity, had the right hand wrapped up to the fingers, to show that the right hand is particularly sacred to good faith."

This, as well as in other instances, is only an ingenious conjecture; for what are called rose-buds on the head of this bust are far more like grapes, by which it more probably shows the union of Love and Wine. At all events, it stands alone among antique gems of the same class, as the finest example of infantine beauty; resembling in sweetness and expression the innocent and playful features of Fiamingo's models of Childhood.

No. 9827 is a profile Head, said to be that of a young Hercules crowned with laurel and covered over the mouth and back of the head with a veil; in which will be seen a filmy lightness of execution that may vie with the most subtle and softened blendings of the painter's practice: nor is the manly character of the countenance on this gem less an object of admiration, exhibiting the talents of the artist (though unknown) to the greatest advantage.

From what has been brought into view, enough has been pointed out to show the beauty of Engraved Gems and the interest they have excited. To enumerate a very moderate portion of the comments and remarks of writers on this subject, would far exceed the limits intended in this Essay; suffice it to say, their works will be found in every civilized country in Europe,—in Italy, France, Germany, Holland, and last, and we must add least in number, England.

The works published in this country on the subject of Engraved Gems, are confined to a work "Treating on the Method of Engraved Gems among the Ancients, compared with the modern;" (this was published, London 1755;) "Raspe's Catalogue of Casts in Tassie's Collection," London, published 1792; and "Select Gems from the Antique," published by John Murray, London, 1804. The Marlborough Collection is private, and those engraved and published by Worlidge are without letter-press.

What have hitherto been pointed out to the attention of the artist and the amateurs in the Gems selected, are from the works of Greek and Roman engravers. Of more recent date, and within our own time,

will be found those of Pikler and Amastini,—names which, though standing deservedly high in the opinion of the best judges and critics, can hardly justify their conduct in the impositions they practised, notwithstanding these were done to show their skill, or from indignation at what they might consider an undue preference given by connoisseurs to the works of the ancients.

Upon this ground Mr. George Cumberland, the author of "*Thoughts on Outline Sculpture, &c.*" becomes their apologist, and says, "Pikler and Amastini made it often their study to deceive in this way; either inflamed by a just resentment at the neglect their talents experienced, or moved by a desire of convicting the ignorant." In a note, the author goes on to state, "One instance, among many, of this amiable artist's indignant operations in this way is well known, and some are recorded in his *Life* lately published at Rome; it is an intaglio Head, called '*Brutus*,' in the Collection of Sir Richard Worsley. The deception was so well managed, that it did no discredit to those who were deceived by it; for it might well pass for a fine Roman work."

A still more recent deception occurred in a purchase made by the late R. P. Knight, of a Gem which, on his own judgement, he bought as an undoubted antique, but which was afterwards proved to be the work of a modern artist (we believe Petrucci).

It appears from Mr. Cumberland's work on *Outline, &c.*, that he was personally acquainted with Pikler; and he bears ample testimony to his abilities as an artist and amiable disposition as a man.

To aid the plan of deception, Mr. Cumberland relates, that "to imitate the effect in cameo, the subtle Pikler polished his finest works with a wheel on which a brush was fixed; but the effect was as might be expected,—not softness, but the air of a thing that time had worn smooth; and he often extinguished his finest traits by this invention." This zealous and intelligent writer on the subject of Art not only gives by name and number many of the casts from Tassie's Collection to illustrate his remarks, but has added at the end of his volume a numerical list of above six hundred heads and subjects from engraved stones, almost all of which are from the finest antiques. These have all been selected with care for the use of artists.

Pikler, it should be observed, was a foreigner, a Tyrolese by birth; but the foundation of his pure and beautiful style of art was laid in Italy. This we believe was not the case with one, at least, of the best artists as a gem engraver of this country; and though others have done well, Burch, who had no advantage from foreign study, may decidedly

be placed at the head of his profession: those who rank in the next degree (though in a very slight grade,) are Marchant and Brown; after them, Dean and Wray.

Of Burch and his works Raspe speaks in the highest terms, and places him on an equality with Pikler or any artist of his period. He refers to the numbers in Tassie's Catalogue of this artist's works, and comments upon their excellence, looking at them with the eye of an amateur, and remarking on them with the judgement of a profound and able critic. We subjoin one of his remarks:

"No. 13,232. (A fine Hunter, finished from a picture by Gilpin.) Burch. This fine piece of anatomy, this charming portrait of a horse, is the *ne plus ultra* of the art; the muscles, the action of the parts, the bones, are all studied and completely ascertained in this sketch; the activity, spirit, fire, sensibility, as well as the beautiful form and proportions of this noble courser, are expressed in his portrait, which is finished with a truth and delicacy that leaves nothing to be wished.

"Few modern artists have attained the excellence of Mr. Burch, for there are few that have studied with his assiduity. He sketches his figures anatomically; and if all his anatomies are studied with the same care as this which we have before us, or his Sketch of Hercules, No. 5850, it were to be wished that he had preserved the impressions, or *pastes*, to make a collection. It would be a treasure of science and study both for admirers and artists."

By these impressions we presume the writer means, showing the progressive states of the work. Of his finished engravings, as well as those of Marchant and Brown, there are selections made, and arranged in different frames by Mr. Tassie.

What has been said of Burch may, in many instances, apply to the works of the two last-mentioned artists. The beauty of their execution at least, if not their knowledge and study of the figure, have claims to the highest praise, as may be seen in the examples in the above-named selections.

The art, or rather the practice, of gem engraving, like that of chasing, has declined in this country; and from its classical and elevated character has sunk to that of representing heraldic forms, animals, symbols, and devices for trinket seals. Some few examples of a higher quality appear at our Annual Exhibition, in which our gem engravers show, by the choice and execution of their subject, that neither the high feeling for the exalted in art, nor the power to execute with skill equally pure, is extinct; the encouragement to light and animate them alone is wanting.

SKETCHES BY A TRAVELLING ARCHITECT.

[Concluded from p. 142.]

LUDGATE HILL is certainly a melancholy approach, compared with the magnificent porticos which encircle the piazza of St. Peter's; but, it is from the comparative meanness of its surrounding area and buildings, that St. Paul's wears an aspect of more apparent external magnitude than the famous Roman Basilica. Nothing can be more absurd than the very common habit of making a mystery of this relative peculiarity in the two churches. Extend the boundaries of St. Paul's Churchyard to four times their present expanse; substitute a huge Egyptian obelisk for Queen Anne's little statue; and magnify St. Paul's School till it exhibit the lofty dimensions of the Vatican Palace,—and St. Paul's Cathedral will then *look* as much smaller than St. Peter's as it really *is*; the relative sizes of the two buildings being, on a rough computation, as *thirty-two to nine*!

I was curious to know what would be the effect of St. Paul's upon my mind after absence and travel. Its exterior came upon me with unimpaired majesty. Determinate in my opinion that our Gothic cathedrals exhibit a sublimity which no Grecian or Italian design ever *can* do, I thought the west front of Wren's church—as it shows what (in a general sense) may be termed a Gothic outline, and affords also a very liberal measure of the picturesque—the most imposing composition of the kind which I had ever seen. Its faults are obvious: but its general proportions are fine; and the campanile turrets, with the intermediate pediment, and the shadowed recesses of the porticos, give to the whole a richness and power which contrasts strongly with the flat and ineffective façade of St. Peter's. The flanks of the English church are also fascinating in their effect—the transeptal projections boldly prominent, and their semicircular porticos charmingly conceived. In short, the outline of St. Paul's plan exhibits an elegance greatly distinguishing it from the other, which is of a clumsy and confused form. Again; the cupola of the London fabric leaves no room for competition as regards the grace of its external contour, or the individual beauty and relative proportion of its details. In comparison, the dome of St. Peter's is *squat*—sinking into itself—as if it *had* been loftier ere the upper part slipped into the lower, like the sliding tube of a patent candlestick. Then, how far superior the encircling colonnade supporting its *unbroken* entablature! The attic above is not less beautiful than novel;—over this, rises the majestic dome, (*undisfigured by rows of*

dormer windows,) developing with charming effect the nature of its ribbed construction, as the gladiator's form derives chief beauty from the external indications of its anatomical frame.—But it is time we enter the cathedral.

On pushing forward the door, I heard the rattling of a chain which prevented its opening more than sufficient for a little key-carrier in brown black to demand two-pence! Not less chilling than this reception at the portal, was the general effect of the interior. Imposing it must always be; but the bare surface of the walls, and the dingy painting on the dome, give it an aspect of poverty, as strongly contrasted by the glowing richness of St. Peter's as would be one of the two-penny door-keepers aforesaid, by the jewelled presence of the Pope. The justice which guides us in affording the palm of beauty to the exterior of St. Paul's, also compels us to acknowledge the superior grandeur of the Roman interior. At the same time this superiority is more conspicuous, as it regards material and decoration than mere architectural character.

The style of the vaulting in the nave and choir of St. Paul's (composed, as it is, of segmental domes upon pendentives,) is certainly more beautiful, and admits a far more correct means of affording light, than the plain cylindrical ceiling of St. Peter's nave, the windows of which are too like those of our common English garrets. The height and diameter also of St. Paul's dome, exhibit a happier relative proportion than is the case in that of St. Peter's, the great height of which takes from the effect of its horizontal expanse. The more open perspective of the side aisles in our cathedral, is, likewise, far preferable to the arch-and-window skreens which encumber the corresponding aisles of the papal building.

The ruling defects of St. Paul's interior are the maimed and distorted character of the arch-work supporting the dome, and the omission of the architrave and cornice over the arches of the nave and choir. The idea of preserving the perspective of the side-aisles through the entire length of the cathedral was excellent; but, if it could not be followed without committing such a complicated offence as the double arches, which (with their many evil concomitants,) appear in the diagonal compartments of the octagon below the whispering gallery, it should have been, at once, unhesitatingly abandoned. The pedestal range which surmounts the order of the nave, had been better placed under the order. In this case, the frieze and architrave might have exhibited (as in St. Peter's) a pleasing continuity, instead of being most illegally interrupted to make way for the archivolts. It

may also be said that the nave is wanting in height and width; but this would have interfered with the plan of "preserving the perspective of the side aisles."

With regard to any further comparison between these churches, than that of beauty, as developed in mere architectural form, it must be made incontestibly in favour of St. Peter's. The respective merits of Sir C. Wren and Buonarotti—or, we may rather say, the essential worth of their designs, if criticized in reference to circumstances, and contemplated with such single-purposed judgment as we should award to a pair of rival plaster casts,—would afford a decision upon the whole favourable to England; but the gigantic magnitude, the marbles, mosaics, gilding, and painting of the Italian temple render any further parallel between the buildings perfectly ridiculous.

ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL exhibits a charming façade. There is no composite to compete for a moment with the bold and beautiful order of Tivoli.

There is a severe tone of classic propriety about the front of the NEW POST OFFICE, which almost awes criticism into silence. Smirke has here emulated the true nobility of Athens, and has "done the deed" of which an Ictinus might be proud. Fretted with the meretricious multiplicities of that school, which took its rise in the restoration of Roman architecture, we cannot but dwell with calm delight upon a testimony, so true as this, to the high benefits which have accrued from the precious labours of Stuart and Revett.

THE BANK OF ENGLAND, like the volume of Shakspeare, exhibits faults that would damn professional mediocrity; beauties that ordinary talent may worship, hopeless of effecting their equal; and a character of originality and fanciful exuberance, which renders it at once the most novel and valuable example of architecture now extant. To comment upon its leading individual features, would keep my cabriolet too long on the stand, and leave me no hope of finishing my intended day's round. Sir John Soane has here afforded us a most valuable store of principles, the study of which will in time have the same good effect upon our Athenian bias, that the existence of Stuart's work has had upon the impetus given by Palladio. When we next erect a cathedral under an injunction *not* to employ the pointed style, let the architect visit with sleepless observation the interior of the Bank, of the National Debt Redemption Office, and of Sir J. Soane's residence in Lincoln's Inn Fields. As I have before ventured to say, he is not to be in any case imitated with servile accuracy. In the activity of his fancy, and the boldness of his daring, he sometimes hazards more than he gains, and is oft-times merely eccentric. But the spirit of a new

beauty, worthy of being classed with those of the standard varieties of ancient India, Egypt, Greece, and the middle ages, pervades a great portion of his works, and will no doubt, in future time, be duly estimated to the great benefit of the nation's taste and the high honour of the author's name.

THE MANSION HOUSE. As the Bank is a unique example of modern fancy, so its near neighbour, my Lord Mayor's palace, stands alone among instances of inventive poverty. Mr. Dance was a freeman of the City, and possibly regaled the aldermen with port and turtle. Palladio was only an architect, and moreover not so well acquainted with the Mayor as the Pope. The Italian master's design was therefore put aside, for that of the "City surveyor," to whom the realization of his plan is less disgraceful than to the citizen committee who unanimously adopted it.

ST. STEPHEN'S, WALBROOK. It is, at least, a reasonable matter for argument, whether the abstract beauties of the exterior of St. Paul's dome, and the interior of St. Stephen's church have their equal in any building that has been erected since the revival of Roman architecture. I have ever been reluctant to admit the propriety of diagonal arches springing from rectangular quoins; but this defect in the example under consideration, is as a spot of the best court-plaster upon the chin of the loveliest court beauty.

ST. MARY'S WOOLNOTH. The exterior heavy and inappropriate, but by no means deficient in merit. Were it the façade of a Mint, Record Office, Jewel Office, or public Treasury, we should call it fine. The interior is of a character totally different from St. Stephen's; but they may still be regarded as fellow-churches, coequally distinguished by architectural propriety and decorative richness.

ROYAL EXCHANGE. Mr. Smith's new tower and panelled attic are in better taste than the old substructure; but it is a question whether the architect has had a sufficient regard to congruity. The breadth and simplicity of the lower part of the new work ill accord with the slender and frittered character of the old:—but Mr. Smith, perhaps, in doing thus much, contemplated more.

THE CUSTOM HOUSE. It is not a feeling of mere humanity, which should prompt us to speak in alleviation of the mental distress Mr. Laing must have experienced on the failure of his building; but, rather, a sense of our own liability to meet with a *misfortune* precisely similar to his. Mr. Laing's folio work on the Custom House will still do him credit as regards, not only the architecture and arrangement, but also the constructive science displayed therein. Smirke's

new centre gives, perhaps, a more harmonious character to the front as a whole; but the old centre, individually considered, was a far superior composition,—simple, grand, and characteristic.

Bless me! the day is on the decline; my sketch book blanks reduced to one; my horse jaded; my driver wearied; and my reader, if I have one, fast asleep. I will but mount the Monument, take a bird's eye view of some matters hitherto unnoticed, and then, adieu to "the travelling architect."

How was it the *Monument* was not delineated in Britton's London? By the way, we absolutely require a third, or even a fourth volume. Here is a scheme for the extension of the work. Let the architect of every new building of *acknowledged public importance*, present to the editor gratuitously a set of drawings made agreeably to certain standard directions, that is, of such limited number and reduced scale, as may economize, as much as possible, the expenditure for engraving;—the authors to send plain statements of the circumstances under which they have been employed, with such leading facts touching material and construction, as the connoisseur or practical man may be interested to know;—the architects, so contributing drawings and descriptions, *also to subscribe* to the work, (or, rather, to one or more volumes, as the case may be,) in common with the amateur purchaser; but to have as their peculiar privilege (besides the entire volume) two detached copies of their contributions on large paper, proof prints. The proprietor of the work will, even then, have sufficient to pay for drawings of those older buildings, the plans of which do not exist: but it may be hoped that by this system he might obtain at least a moderate remuneration.—Here, then, we are—at the top of the Monument. How many new churches! As that of St. Pancras is the truest Greek, so Mr. Savage's church at Chelsea is the most genuine Gothic—for we have there the stone vaulted ceiling, and the evidence of a talent which, with means at hand, would afford us another Westminster Abbey. By the way, in speaking of Gothic churches, it were a sad omission to leave unmentioned the noble church of St. Saviour, which would claim the foremost regard in our proposed "third volume." Among the modern Gothic churches, we find several, proving that the revival of the pointed style (with an equal feeling for splendour, and an increased degree of pure taste,) would be very possible with architects, were it correspondingly so with bishops and pluralist priests. The New Hall, Christchurch, is a noble specimen of the later pointed, and leaves us convinced that Mr. Shaw was competent to rival any ancient work of that class. Of the public buildings

yet unmentioned in the extraordinary panorama which we now contemplate, the India House close beneath, and New Bedlam in the distance, are distinguished by their Ionic porticos. It may seem strange to couple such sundered and differing elevations; but they alike serve to exemplify the certain good effect of giving prominence to the centre of a façade, by the simple application of a colonnade, as *lofty* as may be, and of an horizontal extent, the proportion of which shall exhibit a fair compromise between the claims of its own height and those of the entire building's length. A consideration of this subject may explain why the richer façade of the London Institution, in Moorfields, (though beautiful in its way,) wears an aspect so comparatively unimpressive. The architect of the latter, however, was doubtless compelled to the use of order upon order; or, if he be in any fault here, the beauty of his entrance hall, and the general merit of the entire structure, as regards the excellence of its arrangement and the chasteness of its decorations, should overwhelmingly speak in his favour.

The remark before made, touching the eternal application of Greek porticos to modern churches, may be repeated with regard to almost every other species of building. Not to the frequent employment of this most serviceable addendum, but to the insufficient consideration of the more native parts of the building, should we object. The most striking instance of Attic elegance, debased by meanness of application, is to be seen in Lincoln's Inn Fields, where an Ionic portico of majestic dimensions and exquisite individual beauty, is attached to a front with which it has no more legitimate connexion than the helmet of Pericles with the head of a quaker. But if Surgeon's Hall has no right to such a decoration, still less have the Hoxton alms-houses to a fluted Doric portico. The architect of Highbury College has managed, with far superior taste, to adjust the beauties of Ilyssus to the required simplicity of his building.

The Doric front of the Mark Lane Corn Exchange is, at least, bold and picturesque; but the designer has, in the wing compartments, flirted rather imprudently with the genii of Soane and Smirke. Still more objectionable is the heavy stylobate with which the same architect has loaded the Ionic portal of Salter's Hall. The remarks applied to Bedlam and the India House are borne out also by the front of the new Caledonian Asylum. The prostyle centre of the London Orphan Asylum, and its junction with the wing extremities by open colonnades, are features strongly recommending the architect of this design, as an artist who can contemplate English desiderata through

Athenian media. By the way, the prominent appearance of the roof of Covent Garden Theatre reminds me that I have left unmentioned the vast improvements in Covent Garden Market: and I would here ask, Why have we, in the face of Vitruvius' Tuscan, the Tuscan of Chambers, surmounted by a balustrade? The enlightened architect (for enlightened he is, to a more than usual extent,) has here, unquestionably, committed a *faux pas*. Why did he neglect so perfect and happy an opportunity of the boldly projecting cantilever cornice? With Inigo Jones's Tuscan church as a title-page, there is no excuse for this mistake. The disposition of the Market is admirable: but, in the minor point of decorative propriety, it is faulty. The balustrade employed is a refinement beyond the rusticity of the Tuscan order; and the projecting cornice omitted is a beauty peculiar to it.

—And there winds the Thames, far more glorious at London than the famed Tiber at Rome! Never could the Tiber boast such individual or adjutory beauty: never could she float such ships, or exhibit such bridges. The chief value of Old London Bridge consists in the associations connected with its footways: the spirit of Shakspeare knows what steps have traversed them. But the venerable old structure is disappearing, and yonder rises the modern substitute. The history of the New London Bridge is sufficient to deter any respectable architect from entering upon a competition. That Mr. Rennie was the most proper person in the kingdom to superintend the construction of a gigantic bridge, may be admitted; but, that the early conduct of the business involved a great wrong to Mr. Joseph Gwilt, and a most marked insult to others, we must also assert. As to the *essential* merits of this great work, it is not for a comparatively inexperienced architect to question them; but he may still be allowed to wonder, how the eye of taste can rest with pleasure upon an elevation so affectedly plain as that of the New London Bridge! Small works require breadth and a pervading simplicity; but such a vast extent of surface, as that exhibited by the piers and spandrils of the structure in question, positively demands decoration. Moreover, if Gwilt's circular *segment* was objectionable, Rennie's *ellipse* is not handsome; while the blank piers and dead parapet leave the bridge far less interesting to a Claude or a Calcott than to a costermonger or stage coachman.

After the insipid, blank character of the New London, the Southwark Bridge comes upon us with an increased charm. Its tasteful piers, open spandrils and balustrade, give it a just proportion of the decorative; while the grace of its general outline fascinates in the distance, and the mightiness of its scale astounds on a close inspec-

tion. To form a just idea of its magnitude, we must "take a boat" from one pier to the next! Rennie's grand triumph, however, is the matchless Bridge of "Waterloo." And why of "Waterloo?" Why is such a noble testimony to the spirit of a body of *private individuals*, originating in a noble purpose of *commercial utility*, subsequently adopted as a ready-made monument to commemorate a victory gained by an allied body of European forces? Was there not a sum voted for the erection of a palace expressly monumental, the existence of which might jointly honour the Great Captain's valour and the nation's taste? And is it any way creditable to the Captain's honesty or the public patience, that the money so voted should be quietly pocketed, and the Strand Bridge fathered upon Waterloo?—But the grand work in question has no fault save its name. It were an injustice to particularize, where the balance of excellence is so singularly pervading. The elements of constructive truth and decorative beauty are here so exquisitely blended, that we are left merely to exclaim, with a lover's rapture,

"Any change from what thou art,
Would leave thee less delightful!"

The older bridges are as honourable to their architects and the day of their erection, as the more magnificent works of Rennie; nor is it by comparison with any others in the world that those of Westminster and Blackfriars can lose importance. The latter will, ere long, require much repair; and, when the work shall be agitated, it were well to consider the propriety of supplanting the damsel-like twin columns of the piers by masonry of a (not less ornamental, but) more solid character.

It will be said, my view from the Monument is singularly extensive, and that, in spite of my promised "adieu," I am still protractedly prosy. Moreover, some things have been spoken of to the exclusion of others more worthy; and I have, in several instances, solely commented upon exterior style, where the character of the interiors should have been my more particular subject. We have in London one most extraordinary example of riches clothed in rags; viz. the mansion of Mr. Hope, whose forbidding brick walls inclose a little *Museo Vaticano*. It may be asked, why several modern gim-cracks have been dwelt upon, while I have withheld my *devoirs* to such standard examples of Palladian beauty as Burlington House in Piccadilly, and Lord Spencer's houses in the Green Park?—why, the architectural worth and pictorial riches of the Stafford, Grosvenor, and other Galleries, have not been

dwelt upon with a pride at once professional and national?—why due homage has not been paid to the treasured contents of the British Museum? and why the Egyptian merits of Bullock's edifice are unrecorded?—why I have not paid my meed of admiration to the scientific daring displayed in the Rotherhithe Tunnel and Hammersmith Suspension Bridge?—and, in short, why I have ventured upon a subject, the just treatment of which is incompatible with the time, means, and space allotted? The “why” would be more reasonable, than the reply satisfactory: or, at all events, I may less safely reckon upon the reception of my apology, than upon that of my promised “farewell.”

Finally, then,—I rejoice to find that my return to the vicinity of my starting point, the Tower Stairs, is unaccompanied by a single regret at gratifications past, or any feeling of discontent towards matters present. Though less than a twelvemonth absent, and though the day of my departure seems but as yesterday; yet, in looking through the circumstances of the interval, it is as if I contemplated a vista of years. As perspectives lengthen to the eye, in proportion to the number of objects which divide the extremities; so the lapse of time appears long or short according to the number of incidents which, in its progress, have befallen us, or the variety of positions in which we may have been placed.

And, now—farewell indeed! My Sketch-book is closed—my foot upon the step of the cabriolet—Give me thy hand, good reader; and so, God bless thee!

[Our zealous friend and able contributor having brought his “Sketches” to a close, we have taken the opportunity of recording our obligation by engraving for this present Number an accompanying portrait (which came to our hands,) of the author, G. Wightwick, Esq. of Plymouth. The pleasure which his labours have, as we know, given our readers, will, we trust, be a sufficient apology to our subscribers for this deviation—if it shall be so deemed, from our usual course; as it is a sufficient one to ourselves, that we know of no other so effective means of testifying our own obligations and regard to almost the first writer who has thrown the graces of style over architectural disquisitions, and favoured our pages by his gratuitous communications.—
EDIT.]

NEW NATIONAL GALLERY AND ACADEMY OF ARCHITECTURE.

WE take some credit to ourselves for having devoted no inconsiderable portion of our pages to architectural topics;—for having brought somewhat prominently forward subjects relative to that one of the Fine Arts, which obtains hardly any notice—scarcely a sign of recognition from critics in general. Both the public, and those who affect to direct the public taste, seem to consider the pretensions of Architecture as rather of a negative kind, compared with those of Painting and Sculpture. Even at the head-quarters of the Arts, and in their own domicile, it does not experience much better treatment, being looked upon too much in the light of “a poor relation,” admitted out of mere charity, and compelled to put up with any kind of accommodation, and to submit to slights, the more galling in themselves, because they just stop short of that degree of insult which would warrant notice being taken of them by the aggrieved party.

No one will pretend to say that Architecture is fairly treated at our annual exhibitions. At the Royal Academy, it is true, a room is appropriated to the architectural drawings; yet beyond such accommodation—and that scanty and insufficient enough in itself,—no further attention seems to be bestowed on the matter. So that the subjects are but hung up and catalogued, *how* they are hung seems to be of no moment whatever; or else, notwithstanding every disposition to do justice, it is found impossible to carry such desire into effect. Certainly we do not exaggerate when we affirm, that not above one third—one fourth would perhaps be nearer the truth—of the architectural subjects can be seen as they ought to be. It is hardly necessary for us to observe that an architectural drawing requires to be viewed as closely as an engraving, so that all its detail may be clearly understood; if it will not bear, or does not merit such attentive examination, it will hardly be worth much; and if those who go to look, either cannot or will not bestow such examination, they might almost as well not affect to look at all. So far as merely making a *show* goes, the present system may answer very well; but it certainly is not any way calculated either to promote a taste for architectural drawing, or to raise its value in public estimation. At the Suffolk Street exhibitions, the works of this class are generally so exceedingly few, that they cannot be said to form a distinct feature in them; nor is greater attention paid them: so that there, Architecture has neither the general compliment paid to it which it obtains from the Royal Academy, nor, in the absence of this, any respectful consideration evinced towards individual exhibitors of such

works. Nearly every one of the architectural subjects in the last exhibition of the British Artists, seems to have been studiously put out of sight. Diminutive drawings were—as if in accordance with some nicely calculated inverse theory of optics, probably of Laputan invention—placed either over doorways, or above large oil paintings; else made to serve as a skirting-board,—a situation admirably well calculated, indeed, for close inspection, had nature placed our eyes at the ends of our toes.

We do not say that these inconveniences could always be avoided, or that with every wish to put Architecture upon an equal footing with Painting at their exhibitions, and with every facility for doing so, either the Royal Academy or any other Society of the same kind, could accomplish all that is requisite. At present it is utterly impossible for the Academy to afford sufficient accommodation to the architectural exhibitors; and we therefore acquit them, to a certain extent, of negligence or neglect. But the grievance being irremediable—at least not to be remedied without some very material change of circumstances,—does not render it more tolerable in itself: yet after all, it arises chiefly from circumstances, and admits of being removed. In what way this might be effected, we shall now proceed to show,—at least we will lay our own ideas before our readers; who, should they not concur with us, will doubtless agree that we possess a prodigious talent for that most noble, ancient, and worthy branch of architecture ycleped—*Castle-building*.

Closely connected as the Fine Arts indubitably are, and desirable as it may seem to be, to keep up this natural alliance as much as possible, we rather suspect that they do not always act the more amicably for being yoked together upon all occasions; since they are apt to drag in different directions, and sundry jealousies and wranglings to ensue in consequence. In a body the majority of which consists of painters, the “lion’s share” will as a matter of course be claimed by them; nor that merely as concerns matters more or less of business, but as affects their relationship with the public out-doors. The painters are apt to consider themselves and their works—the chief, if not the exclusive attraction,—the soul, the head as it were, of the body, and the architectural members, as *members* that might be lopped off, if necessity were, without destroying the seat of intelligence. The public, too, seem to have strictly agreed with them to come to the same conclusion, by a certain nice metaphysical distinction between the thing itself and what are only subordinate parts of it,—that the architects belong to the painters, not the painters to the architects. They are not upon the foot-

ing of co-equals, but of humble dependents; and when the public find that their productions are treated as things altogether of an inferior grade, it is no wonder if they seem to consider them beneath their notice. Even the present Professor of Architecture at the Academy appears to be of opinion, that the provision there made for the study of the art is rather inadequate; at least we cannot help so interpreting his avowed intention of bequeathing a fund for the salary of a Professor, until Government shall think fit to supply the deficiency. We conceive, however, that far more than this is required,—it being as desirable to raise the pursuit itself in public estimation, as to provide an improved course of study for those who devote themselves to it.

We are not particularly ambitious of being considered advocates for schism and disunion; yet such a union of painting, sculpture, and architecture, as that of the Royal Academy has been attended with so little advantage to the two latter arts, that we would recommend them to detach themselves from the parent stock, and establish a colony elsewhere.

What is highly advisable under one set of circumstances, may prove quite the contrary under another; although, therefore, it was exceedingly proper at the outset, as it were, of their career, when the Academy was first instituted, that all the Arts should combine their forces, and make as gallant a show of numbers as they could; it does not follow, now that their numbers are so greatly increased, that it is expedient for them to do so any longer. Even in itself such union is little more than nominal, there being no reciprocity of influence between the respective pursuits. Our artists have certainly not inoculated each other, or if they have, art is decidedly noncontagious, for we do not find that any of them have acquired what Allan Cunningham is pleased to term "breadth of character." There is not among them all one Michael Angelo—not one triple-headed Cerberus, able to attack all the Arts together. The architects have learnt nothing from the painters, except it be to become more ambitious of making showy picture looking drawings than good designs, while the painters have learnt nothing whatever from the architects—not even to draw a column when they want one. Neither, we suspect, do they participate in each other's studies, or attend each other's lectures. We should have no objection to meet with *polymaths* among our artists, but we are sure they will not be produced by such an institution.

In almost every other pursuit it is considered that its interests are best promoted by cultivating it specifically, without connecting it with other studies, although they may happen to be so intimately related

to it, that the boundary separating them is only an imaginary and conventional one. Thus, instead of uniting in one common society, agriculturists, horticulturists, and botanists, form themselves into lesser communities, for the purpose of better directing their attention to their immediate objects. If this kind of independency be found advantageous in regard to such studies, still more expedient is it for the due advancement of such an art as Architecture. So long as it continues to follow in the train of Painting, so long must it be content to appear of a subordinate rank. When two, as the adage says, are mounted upon the same horse, one must ride hindmost; and it is unnecessary to add, that at the Royal Academy, Architecture will never be put foremost, but always remain seated at the rump end.

As being more readily understood, in consequence of its employing a familiar language, Painting will invariably be the more popular and attractive; when, therefore, the productions of both arts are associated together, it is obvious which will command the greater attention. To suppose that after persons have already wearied their eyes by looking at a multiplicity of paintings, they will be disposed to look favourably or even to look at all at architectural drawings, is expecting far too much. At the most they will vouchsafe to bestow merely a glance at them: and the same, too, will be the case should they enter the Architectural room first; for, impatience to proceed to the pictures above-stairs will divert their attention; or even if it should not, they will remember very little of these subjects after they have subsequently been engaged by so many others. At present, all the interest of the architectural class merges entirely in that of the exhibition generally; in itself it is considered of no moment whatever, nor is it ever taken into account in estimating the character of any particular season. Were there a separate exhibition of works of architecture, this could hardly be the case; not being mixed up with anything else, it could not very well be mistaken for a mere cipher, but would stand some chance of being spoken of and noticed on its own account. Entertaining such views as these, we cannot be of other opinion than that an "ACADEMY AND GALLERY OF ARCHITECTURE" is an institution very much wanted in this country; and that, too, not merely as concerns the professional study of the art, but as concerns the public likewise. If

"Although much too wise to walk into a well,"

we seem to be altogether visionaries on this subject, we shall not redeem our character for sanity by stopping short here, and will therefore venture to exhibit the outline of our scheme.

One of the principal objects would be to establish a permanent Gallery upon the same footing as the National Gallery of Pictures. This should always be open gratuitously both to the public and to students; and should contain models and drawings, also casts at large of their details, classified according to the various styles, and arranged chronologically in various apartments, so as to display the history, as it were, of the art, and bring it under the eye at one comprehensive view. A systematic collection of this nature would form so admirable a school, and so well calculated to excite an interest for the study which is not now felt, and would so greatly facilitate the means of studying with advantage, that it could not fail to have a very extensive and beneficial influence upon taste,—and if upon taste in respect to architecture, upon taste generally, because there is no pursuit which tends so much to cultivate and exercise taste in the abstract. Neither can it well fail to lead to a relish for Art in every other shape: a taste for Painting or even for Sculpture does not necessarily imply any for Architecture; but a taste for Architecture will almost invariably be found accompanied by a taste for the other two arts; and not only for them, but also for whatever is in any degree connected with embellishment, or whatever comes under the comprehensive title of *virtù*.

Even those who might not feel the value of such a collection in this point of view, might yet be very glad to avail themselves of it for historical information and assistance in their classical studies, by contemplating the majestic edifices of antiquity both in their pristine beauty and their present fallen state, for in both ought they to be exhibited. Thus one room or compartment of the Gallery of Grecian Architecture might be appropriated entirely to Athenian buildings and restorations of them; and in addition to drawings and models of a strictly architectural nature, there ought likewise to be *views*—at least of the principal subjects, for the purpose of enabling the visitor to acquaint himself with their locality, and to judge of their actual effect. So far from being superfluous, this fullness of explanation would add a tenfold interest to the individual subjects; for, however it may be admired, what is but imperfectly understood will afford a comparatively limited gratification; and admiration itself will be little more than the puerile wonder of ignorance. To carry illustration still further, it would be desirable to have also specimens of other antiquities,—utensils, furniture, articles of costume, &c., in the respective apartments in which the various classes of architectural models are deposited.

By his visits to a gallery of this description, whither he might repair as often as he pleased, a person might obtain that information which very

few have now the opportunities of acquiring. Here he would have the fabrics of Greece and Rome, and the master-pieces in other styles of art, before his eyes; and if he did not actually enjoy all the advantages to be derived from contemplating and examining the original structures, he would possess one which the traveller has not at his command, namely, that of being able to compare and confront together different buildings; and of passing immediately from those of one country to those of another. In order to furnish readier means for a comparative study of this kind, there might be one room with models, upon the same scale, of some of the most remarkable specimens of each style, so arranged as to contrast them together; for instance, the Parthenon, the Pantheon, St. Peter's, and St. Paul's; the Temple of Jupiter at Agrigentum, between York Cathedral and Westminster Abbey; St. Mark's at Venice with its ducal palace brought into juxtaposition with the later Venetian style of Palladio; Wren's pagoda-like steeple at St. Bride's, placed beside the celebrated Porcelain Tower at Nang-King. Neither can we be satisfied with mere external models; but should require sectional ones to exhibit both interior construction and ornament,—both general and partial distribution. And here a wide and inexhaustible field presents itself to us: the cavern structures of Elephanta and Ellora; the sepulchral chambers of Egypt; the courts and the baths of the Alhambra; the Rotonda and Thermæ of ancient Rome; the Loggie of the modern Vatican, together with the splendid vestibules and halls of its pontifical Museum that attest the purer taste of the modern Michael Angelo*; the excavated mansions of Pompeii; the pomp of St. Peter's; the gloom of Santa Sophia; the sculptured frost-work of the two splendid chapels at Westminster and Cambridge; the chastened splendour that reigns in the classic galleries of Munich:—the feudal dignity of the ancient baronial hall; the princely elegance and refined luxury that distinguish some of our modern mansions;—these and innumerable other subjects must enrich our museum. Thus concentrated into a focus, as it were, the now scattered rays of Architecture would be capable of warming even the most torpid and frigid, and of quickening the most sluggish insensibility into something like perception of the powers of this art.

In conjunction with this gallery or museum the institution should be supplied with a Library furnished with all the best publications, both literary and graphic, relating to Architecture; and, under certain regulations, this collection might be opened to others as well as to the students.

Having thus traced out our plan for what would constitute a perma-

* Michael Angelo Simonetti.

ment exhibition, we will now consider the provision requisite to be made for the annual exhibitions of designs. Sufficient extent should be allowed, so that there would be no occasion for hanging more than two lines of frames upon each wall; and were there but one, it would be still better, for then each subject could be distinctly seen, nor could there be any choice as to situation. It may be a whimsical maxim of ours, but it is one we cannot easily give up,—that there is no policy in hanging up bad drawings merely to hide so much wall, while there is very great injustice in hanging up good ones where they must escape notice. It is a system altogether so much at variance with the purpose of an exhibition, as to be obviously absurd, at the same time that it is more prejudicial than many may suppose, inasmuch as it favours the introduction of a great deal of trash into all our exhibitions, merely for the sake of filling the rooms from the floor to the ceiling. To show, however, that we have some regard for economy, we would recommend that there should be a low screen extending along the centre of the gallery, by which means the line of surface for hanging drawings would be nearly doubled; and as there would be no occasion for any greater height of walls than what was requisite for pleasing proportions, the ceilings of all the apartments might be vaulted *en berceau*, or be semi-cylindrical; and have besides, deep friezes so as to reduce as much as possible the blank space between the cornice and the upper tier of frames.

Another thing of which we would strongly urge the policy, is to make it a peremptory condition that every original design should be accompanied by a ground plan, if not by a section. So far from encouraging, the Royal Academy actually discountenance this; nor do they, we believe, admit drawings of mere detail illustrative of general elevations. Their object, then, is evidently not so much to promote the Art, as to make a pretty show of picture-like drawings; for it is impossible to appreciate a design fully, either from perspective views alone, or from elevations—at least only as to external appearance; and in proportion as we are prepossessed by them, the more eager do we feel to obtain further information. It is not to be expected that the public in general would at first pay much attention to drawings of the description we allude to, because they have yet to learn how to examine architecture; still, unless they should derive neither information nor pleasure from our museum, it is to be hoped they would soon become sensible of the advantage attending the adoption of what we recommend. The public have to be trained to look at and consider subjects of this class; and in this, as in many other things, *ce n'est que le premier pas qui coute*. Let them but be compelled to give their undivided attention to such productions,

and they will soon begin to derive a satisfaction from them which they do not at present suspect. At first, perhaps, such an exhibition would have attractions for few except real connoisseurs; yet they will draw after them a swarm of others, who beginning in affectation, may at length become in earnest themselves.

Besides this general exhibition, there ought likewise to be one of all the subjects by the students for the competition of prizes; at which the respective programmes for them given by the Academy ought to be hung up in the same room; and this kind of public competition would excite more emulation than the hope of obtaining a medal alone can possibly do.

It will, perhaps, be thought somewhat extravagant and fanciful for us to enter into anything like formal details in regard to a scheme that will altogether be considered no more than mere "moonshine;" yet there is one feature in it we must not withhold. Whenever there was a competition for any public building, all the designs should be in the first instance sent by the candidates to the Academy of Architecture, and there publicly exhibited for a month, or whatever other stated time might be fixed upon*. As ample opportunity would thus be afforded for discussing the merits of the various designs, those upon whom the election ultimately devolved, would have the advantage of public opinion being tolerably well canvassed; and it would be their own fault if they subjected themselves to the charge of gross incompetency as judges, or of flagrant partiality. The names of the candidates would remain concealed as at present, so that opinion could not very well be biassed by a mere name. Still it may be said, an architect might be able to form a cabal in his own favour, and manage to have a preference expressed for his design. It is possible,—barely possible; yet we do not apprehend that much harm could be done in this underhand way; certainly such malpractices could not prevail to the extent there is reason to suppose they do at present, when, if we may credit the tales we have heard, the actual choice has been sometimes determined upon before the ostensible election has commenced. At any rate it would hardly be possible for any design of evidently superior merit to be set aside, unless, indeed, upon some very strong grounds. According to the present system of managing such affairs, the public have no means of judging for themselves. They

* Those who are ingenious in starting objections may perhaps observe that this plan would subject the artist to the tax of finding frames for his drawings. Not at all; because frames might be very well dispensed with on such occasions; and to put all upon the same footing, no frames, or even borders, should be allowed; and the drawings should be all made to a uniform scale.

may be dissatisfied with a building after it is erected, but cannot tell whether any better design for it was sent in.

It would be further desirable, that if not the originals, copies of each set of designs selected for the execution of any public building should be deposited in a certain part of the Academy appropriated to the purpose of a public archive. And in all probability this archive would be further enriched by bequests of original designs by professional men, so as in course of time to accumulate a number of authentic documents, which, for want of such a national repository, are dispersed, if not ultimately lost.

We do not say that our scheme is complete; on the contrary, we are sensible that many improvements might be suggested, for in itself it is no more than a rough draught, showing what is principally to be considered. But here we shall be officiously reminded that we have forgotten the principal thing of all—that which ought foremost to have been taken into calculation, it being the very foundation of the whole superstructure;—namely, how are the ways and means for such a scheme to be provided? Are we prepared with any *estimate* as regards this so material point? That question is to us like Alnaschar's kick of his foot against his basket of brittle ware,—it has dashed to pieces the fabric reared by our imagination; has dispersed our fancyings and fancies, and awoken us most disagreeably from our reverie. Nevertheless we are content that our dream should go forth to the world. There have been projects nearly as grave and as important as ours, calculated to effect an infinity of good, save that they have proved impracticable, although the authors of them, being either more simple or more crafty than ourselves, have left it to others to make that notable discovery.

ENGLISH ARCHITECTS, AND THEIR WORKS.

[Continued from p. 171*.]

— BUTLER. It would almost appear by the manner in which Walpole has used this name, “speaking of Architecture, &c.” that he, Butler,

* Corrections in our last, p. 168, (article Glover,) after “in the front” add “of Northumberland House for the reception of James I.” Also insert THOMAS HOLTE, (who should have come in at p. 96, vol. iv.) Holte was the architect of the Quadrangle of the schools,—that of Merton College, and by fair conjecture of the whole of Wadham College, Oxford, before 1613. These have an air of great grandeur, resulting from the large dimensions of the re-

beautified the chapel of Robert Earl of Salisbury, at Hatfield, as an architect; but Peacham says, (see "*Compleat Gentleman*," p. 310,) "*The Right Honourable Robert Earl of Salisbury and Lord High Treasurer of England, who as he favoureth all learning and excellency, so he is a principall patron of the Art (Painting), having lately employed M. Butler (1661) and many other excellent artists for the beautifying of their houses, especially his chapel at Hatfield.*"

STEPHEN HARRISON, who calls himself,—but Walpole does not say where,—"*joyner and architect*," invented the triumphal arches erected in London for the reception of James I. They were engraved, continues his lordship, by Kip, on a few leaves in folio; a work I never saw but in the library at Chatsworth. In Nichols's *Progresses of King James I.*, vol. i. p. 328, is mentioned "*Harrison's Seven Arches of Triumph, 1603-4:*" these are prefaced by the following remark; that this King's James the First memorable passage from the Tower to Whitehall was described in many contemporary publications, amongst the foremost of which should be noted "*The Arches of Trivmph erected in honor of the high and mighty Prince James, the First of that name King of England, and the Sixt of Scotland, at His Maiesties entrance and passage through his honorable Cittye and Chamber of London* upon the 15th day of March 1603; invented and published by Stephen Harrison, joyner and architect, and graven by William Kip, folio.*" The arches were seven in number, though only five were originally intended; the whole of these were devised by Harrison, and the workmen were employed on them from April 1603 till the end of August, when the exhibition was postponed. The work was recommenced in February 1603-4, and the arches at West Cheap and Temple Bar were then added and completed in six weeks; the publication alluded to above is the same mentioned by Walpole, and consists of the following

lative parts rather than accuracy of proportion: to the lofty tower is attached a series of double columns, which demonstrate the five orders, from the Tuscan at the base to the Composite. This architect has proved that he knew the discrimination, but not the application of them. It is at least possible that he was apprised of a prior instance adapted by Stefano Maruccio (1360) in the Campanile of Santa Chiara at Naples, with the intention of exhibiting the five orders in as many divisions of the tower, three only of which were completed. The porticos of the Chateau d'Anet near Paris, designed by Philibert de Lorme, may have more properly supplied the idea. At Beaupré Castle, Glamorganshire, is a chapel with a front and porch of the Doric order, dated 1600. It consists of three orders, Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian: the capitals and cornices are accurately designed and finished.

* A perfect copy of this work is very rare. See particulars of it in Nichols's *Progresses of James I.*, p. 328.

nine plates very neatly engraved. 1. The title-page, at the top of which is, "Exercitationes virtutum in omni ætate mirificos afferunt fructus," and at the bottom "Monumentum ære perennius." 2. A portrait of the King in his full robes of state, engraved by Lawrence Johnson. In one hand is the sceptre, in the other the regal orb. He has a large ruff, and his hat is ornamented with a circlet of flowers, and surmounted by waving feathers (wanting in Mr. Gough's copy in the Bodleian). At top in one corner of the plate are the royal arms; at the bottom "The High and Mighty Prince James, by the Grace of God King of England, Scotland, Fraunce, and Ireland, Defender of the Faith. 3. The arch at the east end of Fenchurch Street. 4. The arch in Gracechurch Street, by *Italians*. 5. One near the Royal Exchange on Cornhill, by the *Dutch*. 6. Above the great conduit, Cheape, (at the end of Soper Lane, near Queen Street). 7. An arch close to the little conduit in Cheape. 8. One above the conduit in Fleet Street. 9. One at Temple Bar, representing the Temple of Janus.

The engravings are accompanied with descriptive letter-press, over which are the Royal Arms, and those of the City of London.

I have been thus particular in quoting from the Progresses of King James, as a work of four vols. quarto is inaccessible to many readers. See a further account of this book, and its being pirated, at p. 331, vol. i. James's Progress, also at 399, note, of the same volume. There is a considerable degree of fancy as well as learning displayed in the rhymes of the King's entertainment through the City of London in 1603-4, of which Mr. Nichols says he has given but two fifths. The remaining arches may be found in Dekker, who has also given an abridgement of Jonson's share of the pageant (see pp. 337-376, *ibid.*) We have heard much of the temporary erections on our last peace with France, but they shrink to nothing before the costs of the "entertainments" prepared for James's reception. Many of the platforms were of an enormous bulk and height, as were several of the arches. It appears that the citizens began their preparations immediately on the decease of Elizabeth; they were interrupted by the plague, but resumed as soon as the danger was over, and continued to the period of the royal entry. Exclusive of the moulders, plumbers, painters, smiths, &c., who were very numerous, there were employed eighty joiners, sixty carpenters, thirty sawyers, and about seventy common labourers, who wrought without intermission. The whole of the machinery was under the direction of STEPHEN HARRISON, the chief joiner as he is called. The name of *Inigo Jones* does not occur in the list of the architects given by Dekkar, p. 376. G.

From a Gothic magnificence in domestic architecture, to interpolations of classical ornaments and members, and lastly, to a style retaining no part of either in perfection, it must occur that the great mansions which were erected during the reign of James I. were built upon plans which are discriminated from all by which they were preceded, a circumstance immediately obvious to the practised eye. The date of the completion of any great building will be adopted in preference to that of its first foundation, as both of them together will frequently include part of two reigns, which might render any other classification indeterminate. The exclusion of angular or circular bay windows, and the introduction of very large square ones, unequally divided by a transom, and all placed in lengthened rows in the several tiers or stories, form the leading distinction. The parapets were further removed from an appearance of battlements, and the general effect of the whole pile was that of massive solidity, broken generally by one square turret more lofty than those at the angles. The houses of the period of James I. are much less picturesque than those of his predecessors.—The following houses, with the dates of building during this reign, we borrow from Mr. Dallaway's 'Walpole.'

<i>Elevation.</i>	<i>Date.</i>	<i>County.</i>	<i>Founder.</i>	<i>Architect.</i>	<i>Present State.</i>
1. Hatfield,	1611,	Herts,	Rob. E. of Salisbury,	.....	Perfect.
2. Audley Inn,	1616,	Essex,	Thos. E. of Suffolk,	B. Jansen,	Perfect.
3. Wollaton,	.....	Notts,	Sir F. Willoughby,	{ J. Thorpe, & R. Smithson, }	Perfect.
4. Bolsover,	1615,	Derbyshire,	Sir Ch. Cavendish,	{ Hunt and Smithson, }	Dilapidated.
5. Langford Castle,	1612,	Wilts,	Sir T. Gorges,	John Thorpe,	Perfect.
6. Temple Newham,	.....	Yorkshire,	Sir A. Ingram,	.....	Perfect.
7. Charlton,	.....	Kent,	Sir Ad. Newton,	.....	Perfect.
8. Holland House,	1607,	Middlesex,	Sir W. Cope,	John Thorpe,	Perfect.
9. Bramshill,	.....	Hants,	Edw. Lord Zouch,	.....	Perfect.
10. Castle Ashley,	.....	Northamp.	H. Lord Compton,	.....	Perfect.
11. Summerhill,	.....	Kent,	E. of Clanrickarde,	.....	Perfect.
12. Charlton,	.....	Wilts,	Sir Hen. Knevet,	.....	Restored.

This fashion of building enormous houses was still more prevalent during the reigns of James I. and his successor, before the civil wars, even than it had been in the time of Queen Elizabeth. Audley Inn in 1616, Hatfield in 1611, and Charlton House, Wilts, are those in which the best architecture of that æra may be seen. Others of the nobility, deserting their baronial residences, indulged themselves in a rivalry in point of extent and grandeur of their country-houses, which was of course followed by opulent merchants, the founders of new families. Sir Baptist Hicks, the mercer to the Court, was the founder of Campden House, Kensington, and another house of the

same name in Gloucestershire, which was scarcely inferior to Hatfield. This mansion was burned down during the civil wars. It consisted of four fronts, the principal towards the garden, upon the grand terrace; at each angle was a lateral projection of some feet, with spacious bay windows; in the centre a portion with a series of columns of the five orders (as in the schools at Oxford), and an open corridor. The parapet was finished with pediments of a capricious taste, and the chimneys were twisted pillars with Corinthian capitals. A very capacious dome issued from the roof, which was regularly illuminated for the *direction of travellers during the night*. This immense building was enriched with friezes and entablatures most profusely sculptured. It is reported to have been erected at the expense of 29,000*l.*, and to have occupied, with its offices, a site of eight acres. The late Earl of Gainsborough had the plan and elevation. There is scarcely a county in England which cannot boast similar edifices; a very few of them are still inhabited; others to be distinguished only by their ruins, and remembered only by the oldest villagers, who can confirm tradition.

THE ARTIST'S SCRAP-BOOK.—No. III.

HAIL! divine Arts! sublime emanations! sole refuge for the exalted mind amidst an ocean of irrationality! Pure asylum of the unfettered soul, where, soaring to its divine origin, it obtains a triumphant power within its all-wisely ordained limits of space and time! Ye are indeed the fountains of bliss on earth. By your ennobling powers Nature blooms with eternal lustre; the radiant orb of day beams the type of light and life, the burning seal of an incomprehensible Divinity. It is from you that Beauty derives her uncontrollable, her imperishable power:—the lustre of its eye is your own creation; it were, but for your dignified medium, the mere beacon of the sense, and not the window of the soul: but to the poet and the painter it is indeed, "after God's own image," the seat of life, of thought; the herald of each thrill that sweetens life by vast variety; the index to the power that reigns supreme o'er sense, and traces in its mazy course the march of thought. Oh! 'tis the history of man that lights the eye, the faithful record of the future and the past; and the historians, each in their beauteous sphere, paint to the mind the impress of its own creation. The Arts of Poetry and Painting are both exalted states of mind: both

communings in an ideal sphere; the breathings of Imagination at the shrines of Beauty and Truth. Alike independent of the trammels and the tide of Time, they flow a full and pearly stream in their onward course: and while empires are dissolved, cities crumbled in the dust, and generations laid in their narrow cells, these emblems of imperishable lustre gleam o'er the change of ages, bright as the star of Hope, rich with the spoils of the past, and pregnant with emulation for the future.

Honour, then, to your votaries, delightful Arts! chosen priests at your illumined shrine!

"Breasts to whom all the strength of feeling given,
Bear hearts electric—charged with fire from Heaven!"

Poetry seems more allied to the pure instinctive power of conception than Painting; the intuition of a poetical idea is more immediate than the creeping phantasms of the painter's mind. It seems the very breath of man; his natural language; the reflection of the glorious sun in the depths of his heart, that lights him to Creation's mine. It charms by its ubiquitous application, its easy production and attainment. Delighted with a poetical effusion, we transfer to our own minds the glowing talisman; we enregister it in the living pages of our brain, secure of its possession; we feel illumined by another's brightness; from the moment we treasure it, we hail it as a part of ourselves, a varied hue in our own conceptions,

"Which warms our bosoms with impassion'd glow,
Or bids the sacred tide of pity flow."

The painter's efforts have not this singular advantage; he offers no such ethereal creation, that accident has small power over. He only speaks through his material offspring; floats not from breath to breath; but meets the mind only as it meets the eye, save when the mind "enjoying, from absence, with enraptured zest," bids the fair imagining glow in Memory's beauteous realm, a poet-picture coined to the eye, then stamped upon the brain. The improvisatore, in his spontaneous effusions, offers the most exalted picture of a glowing intellect; he ascends at once to a pure tribunal; he lures not the eye to gain the mind: he presents us with a picture we should have created ourselves; we conceive it readily: we embrace a series of fascinations, a gradual development of a scheme of beauty and grandeur; our feelings are interested by suspense; one part paves the way to the other, and we proceed with the exaltation of the poet; share his emotion, and ex-

perience a delight surpassed by his alone. If there be a proud happiness in the triumph of intellect, it must be in that poet's mind, who, with a supernatural impulse, as the chords of his delicately formed mind vibrate to the irresistible impress, yields

"Thoughts that breathe and words that burn."

He is abstracted from the world and its troubled tide—he bursts forth in the irradiation of dazzling power, more pleasing and inferior but to those chosen prophets whose accents seem to hover o'er the scenes of their inspiration, and to have lighted like a curse on the crumbling remains of former grandeur, on the tombs of heroes and sages, and on the shrines of religion.

The art of painting may be justly viewed as the silent language of action—as a faithful vocabulary—a *catalogue raisonné* of the feelings by which we are agitated, as expressed externally, and presents the most perfect representation of human action. A display of poetical painting may impress us with a general notion of any particular circumstance; but however great the talent of the poet, it is by painting alone that we can expect to approach reality. Language may endeavour to depict the expression of a hero, on the field that resounds with his prowess; you will hear of his haughty aspect, the fire of his eyes, the distended nostrils, and the expression of defiance in the mouth; you will be offered a series of characteristics; you perceive the relation of each part with the whole,—but it is at best only a vague imagining,—it is in the production of the painter alone that you behold that description moulded into the identity of a real substantial hero.

Poetry has in one instance an extraordinary advantage over the sister art; it boasts the fountain-head of pleasure: it owns that power, which leads the mind captive to the sublime—the beautiful; which enhances attraction by leaving the anxious brain with but half a conception—a picture whose magic lies in the shadow of doubt—that meets the eye seduced but not content. If a poet would impress us with a supernatural idea of gods, giants or heroes, he extends his proportions so far beyond our accustomed conceptions, and by the aid of mystery, so enhances the sublimity of the idea, that, overwhelmed by the mighty imagining, we feel awed as in the presence of a superior being.

"He ceased, and under his dark brows the nod
Vouchsafed of confirmation. All around
The sov'reign's everlasting head his curls
Ambrosial shook, and the huge mountain reel'd."

Here then is poetry alone, sole mistress of the deep sublime. Can painting dare to personify the dread creations of Homer? Can it at all expect to depict the awful form of Jove or of Mars, or can it even hope to convey an adequate notion of the god-like Achilles, "swiftest of the swift"?

" Tempests of black resentment overcharged
His heart, and indignation fired his eyes."

Woe to the painter who should hope to convey his idea of Milton's Satan—woe indeed to the poet himself, if he ventured to *complete* his picture! It is perfect as much from what is left as from what is given: it is the sign of a great poet, that from the nature of his conception, his reader is led on to complete it without fear; a faint and feeble outline admits of no bold completion—the frail basis crumbles beneath the solid superstructure, but the firm and elevated tone of the poet emboldens his reader. The painter is compelled to adhere more faithfully to the acknowledged proportions of humanity; he may select from the stores of beauty that invite him—he may invest his forms with graceful and majestic contours,—he may bid them bloom in the rose's varied hues, or glow in the "sun's embrowning"—he must still be shackled, and in depicting the God, he is forced to remember the man. Still he has his triumph; and in his works you behold at a glance what the poet produces by reiterated efforts—you behold as it were an age of thought in a lightning-flash of time; and the deep and anxious labours of months and years play like a sunbeam in the mind, demanding no time, exacting no knowledge of the means by which they are conveyed. It has appealed alike to the past as it will to the future,—is of all climes and all dispositions; it is an universal bond betwixt refined man and man; it is the proud stamp of superior power, acknowledged before all tribunals, and the glorious uprising of the spark of life towards an instinctive immortality.

Though their *essence* is far removed from Time's fell tide, imperishable as the soul of man, yet are their progeny its slaves—the works we venerate must yield to its destroying power, and the strains that have roused, and cheered, and lulled, have melted into dull oblivion, save where the blest invention that can perpetuate thought, has rescued them from ruin. Yet the valiant chieftain's words, which fired his ardent ranks and led them on to victory, have perished with him, and the record of his trophies lies buried in his tomb Behold the proud walls of former splendour: where are now their noblest ornaments—the painter's bright visions of the great, the good, the beauteous,—alas! mellowing into ripened lustre, they have crumbled in the dust

Yet are there strains that survive this wreck,—strains woven with the hopes of man—linked with his life. Methinks I see the venerable sages of the early world (whose flowing beards, chilled with the icy touch, are chroniclers to time), sheltered by the umbrageous trees, breathing forth the secret of the past, the legends of their land, their deeds of arms, their loves,—while an attentive circle of their sons, in manly form conspicuous, leaning on their shepherd crooks, glean emulation from the exciting tale, and hope that “Heaven may make them all such men.” These from age to age descend; and when the bard sweeps the strings of his unfashioned instrument, civilized man wonders at the simple beauty of his tale.

To love and friendship are the arts of painting and poetry alike invaluable. When blessed with the presence of a beloved object, is not the language of love, poetry?—do we not breathe our hopes and fears almost in numbers most harmonious? And then when absence fans the flame, does not the other beauteous art prevent the cold sad change from sweet communion to bitter solitude? The features we have loved rise to the eye, a world of endearing recollections. . . .

Do we behold all that we have loved upon the couch of death, it is some satisfaction to have snatched the purest part of love and friendship from his grasp. The mouldering frame sinks from our sight, but, thanks to the painter's art, we travel o'er the well-known face, enjoying what we find, leaving to imagination all the minor charms the art refuses. Man cannot *paint* his love for fellow-man—the outpourings of a full spirit;—but he can present to you the human face lit with love, or debased with passion; he can produce the human eye with genius beaming—its various expressions note securely down. He also can rouse the emulation of the young. Behold those youths clustered before yon effigy of the master of Imperial Rome gazing at his manly face, and swelling with enthusiasm as the tale of his glory rises to their minds. Mark how they unconsciously assume a bolder attitude, a nobler aspect, they seem to glean from Cæsar's image the secret of his greatness . . . Who with a mind to feel and to reflect that is not awed by the sublimity of Michael Angelo and the purity of Rafaele, that does not bend in veneration before their creations? If there be such a man, he is no painter—no poet,—and must be content to envy where he cannot comprehend.

When we view painting as an art that requires so many requisites besides the poet's—when we reflect that the education of a painter's hand must keep pace with the cultivation of his mind, that all attempt at soaring until technicality has been acquired, recoils upon the tyro,

and that he has a language so much more magical than the poet's (as by a greater deception he produces a more powerful semblance of reality),—when we reflect that he is more shackled in the choice of a subject, that he commands the *descriptive* alone against the poet's *hosts*, and that he has less scope for exertion, less time to appeal to the judgment, and is deprived of the aid of mystery (which, with him, would be the symbol of ignorance),—if with all these disadvantages he triumphs, his is indeed a glorious struggle.

To men of imagination the pictures of poetry may be productive of the greater delight, by affording them a more ample field for the indulgence of their peculiar faculty. Although images are presented to the mind with considerable distinctness, the fancy has still room to combine the poet's imaginings, and render them congenial to every taste. Although Homer has depicted the godlike form of Peleus' son, it is, after all, but a general idea of a transcendent hero, distinguished it is true from the other Grecian chiefs, yet not individualized. Painting, on the contrary, presents that which must be viewed as the painter produced it, with due allowance for difference of perception, education, feelings, &c. ; it is there before you, immutable, and the only commentary can be found in these differences ; whereas, in poetry, we are each set on to form our own ideas of the subject proposed.

The means of painting are laborious in the extreme—its mechanism wonderful ; the *existence* of thought as it ripens to the oft-repeated touch ; the chaotic mass yielding to order, as the mind shines on the canvas, and reflects its varied hues ;—whereas, in poetry, there is less to lure to perfection, after the dawn of an idea ; the mere polishing it into shape conveys less pleasure than the ever-varying shades of the painter's offspring. The one is a sickly child, propped and coaxed into vigour with a parent's anxiety ; the other is a robust bantling, whose exuberance of health and spirit requires checking. In general, the first conception of the poet is more bold and fanciful than his pruned vineyard ; he flinches at the recollection of the prowling critic. His full first feeling was vented in the first sweeping tide ; but as sundry prohibitory pangs steal across his contracting brow, he calms the ruffled waters, razes the mountains, clears away the stormy clouds, as he casts a desponding thought on the age in which he writes, the people he addresses, and the Argus-eyed critics before whose tribunal he must appear. He sighs to think that some of his bold headlands, jutting proudly into the ocean of independence, must be reduced to the petty vision of these dwarf literatists. Dash goes his pen through irradiate conceptions,

“ Those strokes of Art divine,”

and his pet is ushered to the notice of a critic-led public, as well behaved and as submissive to a civilized tribunal as a fond parent could possibly wish.

Are the flights of a painter as formally opposed? may be the next question. I fear the answer must be, If he flies beyond people's conceptions, his flight will be as impotent in the eyes of Fortune as that of the ill-winged Icarus; he has but one privilege left, that of feeling very conscious of a decidedly dignified intention. If he paints to satisfy his conscience, (that is, endeavouring to put into practice those ideas of moral beauty he has been taught to revere, without any shackling reference to saleable articles or favourable opinions,) he will in all probability be left a piteous memento of unique daring and ill-judged perseverance. If he paints to please the world, where, I ask, can his conscience be? He must be content to hitch it on the mundane tribunal, and be satisfied (most hard fate!) to live like a gentleman on the fat of the land, and carry hand in hand the social accomplishments of the courtier and the pleasing powers of the artist, resigning every hope of the honourable goal of artistic fame, where genius revels in its own abstraction, and creates where others only receive the creation.

The same elevated feeling, and the same refined taste, pervade both painting and poetry; they spring from the same source, they flow in the same channel, and expand in the same ocean. It is from Nature they both derive their existence, and her works constitute their proper sphere of action: the fancy may combine the productions of creation, may modify its various excellencies, so as to present a novel arrangement; still though the union of objects, which were before scattered, bears the semblance of absolute invention, we must return to the abstract view; and disuniting this ingenious combination, analyse its component parts, and trace the groundwork of nature on which the fabric was erected. The terrific representations of demons, or the graceful and ærial forms of angels and fairies, are but modifications of nature; the former exaggerated combinations of the human figure, and the latter refined and harmonious imitations of earthly perfection.

Long may these enchanting arts be linked together in intellectual fellowship! Long may their glories point to man the true source of moral grandeur and beauty! And may the genius of Britain, proud of the laurels on the poet's brow, inspire the painter with emulation of his greatness, and lead him victor to her shrine!

NATIONAL GALLERY OF PAINTINGS.*

THE works of Hogarth and of Copley only remain to be noticed, to complete the catalogue of British worthies who have yet found a niche in the Gallery of the Nation.

'The Death of the Earl of Chatham in the House of Peers', by Copley, presented by the Earl of Liverpool, is nobly conceived, and executed with appropriate feeling: there is much senatorial dignity in the characters and composition. The figures being all portraits, there is little room for the display of fancy or taste, and the subject must be allowed to have been so far unfavourable to the painter. Truth and judgment have in this instance supplied their place, and it is impossible to look into this picture without feeling strongly affected by the awfulness of the event it strikingly commemorates, and at the same time admiring the skill and talent of the artist. It is an appropriate offering from a minister to the Gallery of the Nation.

'The Marriage à la Mode', painted by William Hogarth, *the engraver*, may be said to form a drama in six acts, in which the plot and incidents are admirably harmonized, and the actors play their parts to perfection. Hogarth will certainly be celebrated more as a moralist than as a painter, and we incline strongly to Lord Orford's estimate of his "slender" powers in that way, whose judgment, though tainted by conceit, must be allowed to have been acute and strong. The story is told in terms at once familiar and impressive, and the catastrophe strikes home to the bosoms of all, but more deeply, it is to be hoped, on those of the sordid and thoughtless sinner. The singular felicity with which the most trivial things are made accessory to the completion of the author's intention is, in these well-known pictures, as indeed in all the works of this extraordinary artist and man, most remarkable; and although we do occasionally discover passages of fine painting in them, the style is in general of a homely character, best suited to the subject, and to the capacities of that class of persons to whom the moral is chiefly addressed. A higher style of art would have been totally unsuited to the localities of place and costume which form the leading features of all Hogarth's compositions—and we cannot too much admire the address with which he could introduce agents even of a low character to support the moral, without disparaging its force.

Hogarth was of the first class of moralists,—he had a brave spirit, as well as an acute and observant mind; he saw deeply into human na-

* Erratum in last Number: p. 173, line 5, for fellows read followers.

ture, and exercised his original powers fearlessly in the cause of virtue. His works may class with the dramas of Foote and O'Keefe, and with the poetry of Crabbe.

His own portrait (which, as well as the series of pictures before described, was part of the Angerstein Collection,) is full of life and expression; there is a quaintness and look of dry humour in the countenance, somewhat akin to that of the excellent comedian, once *Quick*—now dead. It bespeaks the humourist, and one not likely to be very tender or delicate in the use of his weapons, at the same time that the jolly roundness of face indicates natural good humour, ready to make amends for any pain he might have unjustly inflicted. His pug, his palette, and his velvet cap, all happily introduced, according to his usual method, to fill up and embellish the scene, give an air of genuineness to the portrait. We cannot doubt the resemblance, and it is well drawn and coloured.

We have, somewhere in the course of these imperfect remarks, claimed credit for not having paid any blind deference to names,—in proof of which we have yet to speak of those which must ever stand supreme in the catalogue of distinguished painters, viz.—Coreggio, Raffaele, and Michael Angelo. There are in the Gallery three pictures by Coreggio, and one by each of the other illustrious contemporaries, none of them large, or very prominent in character.

The 'Portrait of Pope Julius II.' by Raffaele, however pure and correct in its design and execution, will never excite much admiration, but from the practised eyes of the learned few. It may gratify, but is not capable of awakening a love of art.

The 'Dream,' as it is called, by M. Angelo, is doubtless his design, if not the work of his hand; for in the fine collection of drawings left by Sir Thomas Lawrence, we find a highly finished composition precisely similar, but infinitely superior in every respect; it is indeed one of the wonders of that justly famed collection.

The 'Holy Family,' a small but beautiful cabinet picture by Coreggio, purchased at an enormous price, according to report, is a very favourable specimen of the peculiar gracefulness of his pencil. As compared with the works of other men, this picture is entitled to a very high degree of praise, but it sinks in comparison with other and far finer works by Coreggio himself. It has not the fullness and finish which render the genuine works of this great master so perfect in form and colour. It appears to us to lack the *marking* of the master's hand, and though the conception is thoroughly *Coreggiesque*, there is a timidity and tamelessness in the workmanship. The infant is, however, truly beau-

tiful, and can be the offspring of no other mind than that of the pure and graceful Antonio Allegri.

We are prepared to speak in very high terms of the picture of 'Our Saviour praying in the Garden, immediately before his Betrayal,' which, though small in size is great in quality*. The singular depth of tone and the high elevation of the sentiment bespeak the great powers of conception and execution which Coreggio possessed, and of which, though cut off in early life, he has left us many and indisputable examples. He may perhaps be justly called the head of his class, having superadded beauty to the purity of *Rafaello*.—There are two other pictures in London similar to this; one in the possession of the Duke of Wellington, and one other: of the latter we are not prepared to speak, but the only material difference between the two first-mentioned is that the Duke's is not so black in the shadows as the picture in the Gallery. They have both somewhat the air and hue of the Spanish school.

There are also two Groups of Heads by this great master,—parts doubtless of a larger picture, and though apparently painted in oil, have much the character of Cartoons. They are from the Orleans Collection.

Besides the pictures we have particularized there are in the Gallery specimens of other distinguished masters, but not striking in quality or character. There are fine landscapes by Cuyp and Both, and portraits by Bronzino, Da Vinci, Murillo and Velasquez, also by Piombo; rich bits of colour and composition by Tintoret, Giorgione and Bourdon. From the sober pencils of Guercino and F. Mola we have also specimens well composed and fine in tone and colour; and 'Holy Families' by Del Sarto and Baroccio.

Thinking that the Library of the Fine Arts should possess a catalogue of the Gallery of the nation, we have from time to time presented an imperfect notice of, we believe, all the pictures, with such remarks as have occurred to our minds, unbiassed by the opinions of any other person. If the perusal shall afford to any one reader a tithe of the pleasure we have had in the perusal of the pictures, we shall be fully satisfied. The time approaches when we may expect to see them in a new light.

* A good mezzotint from this is published among the "Gems of Art."
—G. Cooke.

Catalogue of the Pictures in the National Gallery.

[The Pictures marked (*) were those of the late J. J. Angerstein, Esq., purchased by the Government as the nucleus of the National Collection. They are 38 in number, and were bought for 57,000*l.*!]

- | No. | Painter. | <i>Subject of the Picture.</i> |
|------|----------------------|---|
| 1. | Wilson. | A Landscape, in which is represented the Story of Niobe.
(Presented by Sir George Beaumont, Bart.) (on canvas.) |
| *2. | Wilkie. | The Village Festival. (on canvas.) |
| 3. | West. | Cleombrotus ordered into banishment by Leonidas. (Presented by William Wilkins, Esq.) (on canvas.) |
| *4. | Hogarth. | The Marriage à la Mode. No. 1. (on canvas.) |
| *5. | Ditto. | The Marriage à la Mode. No. 2. (on canvas.) |
| *6. | Ditto. | The Marriage à la Mode. No. 3. (on canvas.) |
| *7. | Ditto. | The Marriage à la Mode. No. 4. (on canvas.) |
| *8. | Ditto. | The Marriage à la Mode. No. 5. (on canvas.) |
| *9. | Ditto. | The Marriage à la Mode. No. 6. (on canvas.) |
| 10. | Wilson. | View of Mæcenas' Villa at Tivoli. (Presented by Sir George Beaumont, Bart.) (on canvas.) |
| *11. | Hogarth. | His own Portrait, with his Dog. (on canvas.) |
| 12. | Copley. | The Death of Lord Chatham in the House of Lords. (Presented by the Right Honourable the Earl of Liverpool.) (on canvas.) |
| 13. | West. | Pylades and Orestes. (Presented by Sir George Beaumont, Bart.) (on canvas.) |
| 14. | Sir G. Beaumont. | A Landscape; the Figures representing "Jaques contemplating the wounded Stag." From Shakspeare's "As You like It." (Presented by the Dowager Lady Beaumont.) (on canvas.) |
| 15. | Nicholas Poussin. | A Landscape with Figures. (Presented by Sir George Beaumont, Bart.) (on canvas.) |
| 16. | West. | Christ Healing the Sick in the Temple. (Presented by the Governors of the British Institution.) (on canvas.) |
| 17. | Sir G. Beaumont. | A Landscape. (Presented by the Dowager Lady Beaumont.) (on wood.) |
| 18. | Both. | A Mountainous Landscape, with Figures. (Presented by Sir George Beaumont, Bart.) (on canvas.) |
| *19. | Sir Joshua Reynolds. | Portrait of Lord Heathfield, the Defender of Gibraltar. (on canvas.) |
| 20. | Canaletto. | A View in Venice. (Presented by Sir George Beaumont, Bart.) (on canvas.) |
| *21. | Correggio. | A Study of Heads. From the Orleans Collection. (on canvas.) |
| *22. | Correggio. | A Study of Heads. From the Orleans Collection. (on canvas.) |
| 23. | West. | The Last Supper. (Presented by His Majesty George the Fourth.) (on canvas.) |
| *24. | Velasquez. | Portraits of Ferdinand (of Medicis) Second Duke of Tuscany. |

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- | No. | Painter. | Subject of the Picture. |
|------|-------------------------------|--|
| | | cany, and his Wife Victoria della Rovere, Heiress of the Dukes of Urbino. (on canvas.) |
| *25. | <i>Annibale Caracci.</i> | St. John in the Wilderness. From the Orleans Collection. (on canvas.) |
| 26. | <i>Tintoretto.</i> | St. George destroying the Dragon. (Bequeathed by the Rev. William Holwell Carr.) (on canvas.) |
| *27. | <i>Vandyck.</i> | Portrait of Govartius. (on wood.) |
| 28. | <i>Sir Joshua Reynolds.</i> | The Banished Lord. (Presented by the Rev. William Long.) (on canvas.) |
| 29. | <i>Giorgione.</i> | The Martyrdom of St. Peter. From the Orleans Collection. (Bequeathed by the Rev. William Holwell Carr.) (on canvas.) |
| 30. | <i>Titian.</i> | The Holy Family. From the Borghese Palace. (Bequeathed by the Rev. William Holwell Carr.) (on canvas.) |
| 31. | <i>Rubens.</i> | Peace driving away the Horrors of War. Painted for King Charles I. (From the Balbi Palace at Genoa.) (Presented by the Most Noble the Marquis of Stafford, K. G.) (on canvas.) |
| *32. | <i>Rembrandt.</i> | The Adoration of the Shepherds. (on canvas.) |
| 33. | <i>Lionardo da Vinci.</i> | Christ disputing with the Doctors. Formerly in the Aldobrandini Palace. (Bequeathed by the Rev. William Holwell Carr.) (on wood.) |
| *34. | <i>Ludov. Caracci.</i> | Susanna and the Elders. From the Orleans Collection. (on canvas.) |
| 35. | <i>Sir Joshua Reynolds.</i> | Portrait of the Right Honourable William Windham. (Bequeathed by George James Cholmondeley, Esq.) (on canvas.) |
| 36. | <i>Sebastian Bourdon.</i> | A Landscape, in which is represented the Ark of the Covenant. Bequeathed to Sir George Beaumont by Sir Joshua Reynolds. (Presented by Sir George Beaumont, Bart.) (on canvas.) |
| 37. | <i>Sebastiano del Piombo.</i> | Portraits of Cardinal Hippolito de Medici and of Sebastiano del Piombo. Formerly in the Borghese Palace. (Bequeathed by the Rev. William Holwell Carr.) (on wood.) |
| 38. | <i>Annibale Caracci.</i> | Christ appearing to St. Peter after his Resurrection. Formerly in the Aldobrandini Palace. (on wood.) |
| 39. | <i>Claude.</i> | A Landscape, with Figures; representing the Annunciation of the Virgin. (Presented by Sir George Beaumont, Bart.) (on canvas.) |
| 40. | <i>Domenichino.</i> | A Landscape, in which is represented the Story of St. George and the Dragon. (Bequeathed by the Rev. William Holwell Carr.) (on wood.) |
| 41. | <i>Claude.</i> | A Landscape. (Presented by Sir George Beaumont, Bart.) (on canvas.) |
| 42. | <i>Gainsborough.</i> | The Watering-place. (Presented by the Right Honourable Lord Farnborough.) (on canvas.) |
| *43. | <i>Vandyck.</i> | The Portrait of Rubens. Formerly in the Collection of Sir Joshua Reynolds. (on canvas.) |
| 44. | <i>Claude.</i> | A Landscape, in which is represented the Story of Narcissus. (Presented by Sir George Beaumont, Bart.) (on canvas.) |

Catalogue of the Pictures in the National Gallery. 237

- | No. | Painter. | Subject of the Picture. |
|------|------------------------------------|--|
| 45. | <i>Rembrandt.</i> | Portrait of a Jew. (Presented by Sir George Beaumont, Bart.) (on canvas.) |
| 46. | <i>Ercole di Ferrara.</i> | The Conversion of St. Paul. Formerly in the Adobrandini Palace. (Bequeathed by the Rev. William Holwell Carr.) (on wood.) |
| 47. | <i>Garofalo.</i> | The Vision of St. Augustin. Formerly in the Corsini Palace. (Bequeathed by the Rev. William Holwell Carr.) (on wood.) |
| 48. | <i>Michael Angelo Buonarrotti.</i> | Michael Angelo's Dream. Formerly in the Barberini Palace. (Bequeathed by the Rev. William Holwell Carr.) (on wood.) |
| 49. | <i>Nicholas Poussin.</i> | A Bacchanalian Scene. (on canvas.) |
| 50. | <i>Sir Joshua Reynolds.</i> | A Man's Head. (Presented by Sir George Beaumont, Bart.) (on canvas.) |
| *51. | <i>Titian.</i> | A Concert. (on canvas.) |
| *52. | <i>Rubens.</i> | The Rape of the Sabine Women. (on wood.) |
| 53. | <i>Baroccio.</i> | The Holy Family. Formerly in the Cesare Palace, Perugia. (Bequeathed by the Rev. William Holwell Carr.) (on canvas.) |
| *54. | <i>Rubens.</i> | The Holy Family, with St. George, a Female Saint, and Angels. (on canvas.) |
| *55. | <i>Annibale Caracci.</i> | Apollo and Silenus. Formerly in the Lancillotti Palace. (on wood.) |
| *56. | <i>Correggio.</i> | Christ Praying in the Garden. (on wood.) |
| *57. | <i>Rembrandt.</i> | The Woman taken in Adultery. Painted for the Burgomaster Six. (on wood.) |
| 58. | <i>Rembrandt.</i> | A Woman Bathing. (Bequeathed by the Rev. William Holwell Carr.) (on wood.) |
| 59. | <i>Wilkie.</i> | The Blind Fiddler. (Presented by Sir George Beaumont, Bart.) (on wood.) |
| *60. | <i>Nicholas Poussin.</i> | A Bacchanalian Dance. Formerly in the Collection of Mons. de Calonne. (on canvas.) |
| 61. | <i>Annibale Caracci.</i> | Prince Giustiniani returning from Hunting. Formerly in the Giustiniani Palace, Rome. (Bequeathed by the Rev. William Holwell Carr.) (on canvas.) |
| *62. | <i>Raphael.</i> | Portrait of Pope Julius the Second. From the Borghese Palace. (on wood.) |
| 63. | <i>Sebastiano del Piombo.</i> | Portrait of Giulia Gonzaga. Formerly in the Borghese Palace. (Bequeathed by the Rev. William Holwell Carr.) (on canvas.) |
| 64. | <i>Rubens.</i> | A Landscape, with Figures, &c. Formerly in the Balbi Palace at Genoa. (Presented by Sir George Beaumont, Bart.) (on wood.) |
| 65. | <i>Guercino.</i> | The Dead Christ, with Angels. Formerly in the Borghese Palace. (Bequeathed by the Rev. William Holwell Carr.) (on copper.) |
| 66. | <i>Annibale Caracci.</i> | Pan teaching Apollo the Use of the Pipe. From the Lancillotti Palace. (on wood.) |
| 67. | <i>Claude.</i> | A Landscape, in which is represented the Story of Cephalus and Procris. (Presented by Sir George Beaumont, Bart.) (on canvas.) |
| 68. | <i>Rembrandt.</i> | A Landscape; representing the Story of Tobias and the |

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- | No. | Painter. | Subject of the Picture. |
|------|-----------------------------|--|
| | | Angel. (Bequeathed by the Rev. William Holwell Carr.)
(on wood.) |
| 69. | <i>Domenichino.</i> | The Stoning of Stephen. From the Collection of Lucien Buonaparte. (Bequeathed by the Rev. William Holwell Carr.) (on canvas.) |
| 70. | <i>Nicholas Poussin.</i> | Cephalus and Aurora. (Bequeathed by George James Cholmondeley, Esq.) (on canvas.) |
| 71. | <i>Annibale Caracci.</i> | A Landscape with Figures. From the Collection of Prince Cellamare, Naples. (Bequeathed by the Rev. William Holwell Carr.) (on canvas.) |
| 72. | <i>Francisco Mola.</i> | St. John Preaching. From the Collection of Mons. Robet, Paris. (Bequeathed by the Rev. William Holwell Carr.) (on canvas.) |
| 73. | <i>Paulo Veronese.</i> | The Rape of Europa. Formerly in the Orleans Collection. (Bequeathed by the Rev. William Holwell Carr.) (on canvas.) |
| 74. | <i>Andrea del Sarto.</i> | The Holy Family. Formerly in the Aldobrandini Palace. (Bequeathed by the Rev. William Holwell Carr.) (on wood.) |
| 75. | <i>Murillo.</i> | A Spanish Peasant Boy. (Presented by M. M. Zachary, Esq.) (on canvas.) |
| *76. | <i>Cuyp.</i> | A Landscape; Evening; with Horses, Cattle, and Figures. From the Collection of Sir Laurence Dundas. (on canvas.) |
| *77. | <i>Domenichino.</i> | Erminia discovering the Shepherds. From Tasso's Jerusalem Delivered. (on canvas.) |
| *78. | <i>Gaspar Poussin.</i> | A Land Storm. From the Lansdown Collection. (on canvas.) |
| *79. | <i>Gaspar Poussin.</i> | A Landscape, with Figures; representing Abraham preparing to sacrifice his Son Isaac. From the Colonna Palace. (on canvas.) |
| 80. | <i>Gainsborough.</i> | The Market-Cart. (Presented by the Governors of the British Institution.) (on canvas.) |
| *81. | <i>Claude.</i> | A Landscape, with Figures; representing the Marriage of Rebecca. From the Collection of the Duke de Bouillon. (on canvas.) |
| 82. | <i>Paulo Veronese.</i> | The Consecration of St. Nicholas. Painted for the Church of St. Nicholas at Venice. (Presented by the Governors of the British Institution.) (on canvas.) |
| 83. | <i>Sir Joshua Reynolds.</i> | The Holy Family. (Presented by the Governors of the British Institution.) (on canvas.) |
| *84. | <i>Claude.</i> | A Sea-Port, in which is represented the Embarkation of the Queen of Sheba on her Visit to Solomon. From the Collection of the Duke de Bouillon. (on canvas.) |
| 85. | <i>Gaspar Poussin.</i> | A Landscape; View of Larici. Formerly in the Corsini Palace. (Bequeathed by the Rev. William Holwell Carr.) (on canvas.) |
| 86. | <i>Correggio.</i> | The Holy Family. Formerly in the Collection of the King of Spain. (on wood.) |
| 87. | <i>Gaspar Poussin.</i> | A Landscape; View of the Gallery at Albano. Formerly in the Corsini Palace. (Bequeathed by the Rev. William Holwell Carr.) (on canvas.) |

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- | No. | Painter. | Subject of the Picture. |
|-------|-----------------------------------|--|
| 88. | <i>Julio Romano.</i> | Charity. Formerly in the Aldobrandini Palace, Rome. (Bequeathed by the Rev. William Holwell Carr.) (on wood.) |
| 89. | <i>Claude.</i> | A Landscape, with Figures; representing Sinon brought prisoner to Priam. Formerly in the Chigi Palace. (Bequeathed by the Rev. William Holwell Carr.) (on canvas.) |
| *90. | <i>Titian.</i> | The Rape of Ganymede. From the Colonna Palace. (on canvas.) |
| 91. | <i>Parmegiano.</i> | The Vision of St. Jerome. Painted for the Buffalini Family in 1527. Purchased in 1790, by Mr. Durno, from a Descendant of the Family, after the Earthquake at Citta di Castello. (Presented by the Governors of the British Institution.) (on wood.) |
| 92. | <i>Rembrandt.</i> | Christ taken down from the Cross. Formerly in the Collection of Sir Joshua Reynolds. (Presented by Sir George Beaumont, Bart.) (on wood.) |
| 93. | <i>Domenichino.</i> | St. Jerome with the Angel. Formerly in the Aldobrandini Palace. (Bequeathed by the Rev. William Holwell Carr.) (on canvas.) |
| 94. | <i>Domenichino.</i> | Tobias and the Angel, in a Landscape. Formerly in the Colonna Palace. (Bequeathed by the Rev. William Holwell Carr.) (on copper.) |
| 95. | <i>Mazzolini di Ferrari.</i> | The Holy Family. Formerly in the Durazzo Palace, Genoa. (Bequeathed by the Rev. William Holwell Carr.) (on wood.) |
| 96. | <i>Bronzino.</i> | Portrait of a Lady. From the Collection of the Duca de San Vitale, Parma. (Bequeathed by the Rev. William Holwell Carr.) (on wood.) |
| 97. | <i>Gaspar Poussin and Albano.</i> | A Landscape: Dido and Eneas in the Storm. Formerly in the Falconieri Palace. (Bequeathed by the Rev. William Holwell Carr.) (on canvas.) |
| *98. | <i>Titian.</i> | Venus and Adonis. From the Colonna Palace. (on canvas.) |
| 99. | <i>Guido.</i> | St. Jerome. (Bequeathed by the Rev. William Holwell Carr.) (on canvas.) |
| *100. | <i>Claude.</i> | An Italian Sea-Port at Sunset, with Figures. (on canvas.) |
| *101. | <i>Vandyck.</i> | The Emperor Theodosius refused admittance into the Church by St. Ambrose. (on canvas.) |
| *102. | <i>Sebastiano del Piombo.</i> | Christ raising Lazarus. From the Orleans Collection. (on canvas.) |
| *103. | <i>Claude.</i> | A Sea-Port at Sun-set, in which is represented the Legend of the Embarkation of St. Ursula. Formerly in the Barberini Palace. (on canvas.) |
| *104. | <i>Claude.</i> | A Landscape, with Figures. (on canvas.) |
| 105. | <i>Ludovico Caracci.</i> | The "Ecce Homo." From the Original by Correggio. Bequeathed by the Rev. William Holwell Carr. (on wood.) |
| 106. | <i>Rubens.</i> | St. Bavon. Formerly in the Cornega Palace, Genoa. (Bequeathed by the Rev. William Holwell Carr.) (on wood.) |
| 107. | <i>Titian.</i> | Bacchus and Ariadne. From the Aldobrandini Palace. (on canvas.) |
| 108. | <i>Jackson.</i> | Portrait of the Rev. William Holwell Carr. Painted by his direction, to be placed in the National Gallery. (on canvas.) |

CRITICAL NOTICES.

Views of the Old and New London Bridges. Drawn and Etched by E. W. Cooke. Part I.—J. Brown, Old Broad Street.

THE bridge of a thousand years has passed away from before our eyes, and is now doomed, to use the words of its chronicler, "to live only in memory and the draughts made of its image." Among these Mr. Cooke's must be pronounced to hold the first place, and he is certainly entitled to the gratitude of all lovers of antiquity as well as of architecture. The drawings are remarkable for equal boldness and topographical accuracy; and we sincerely trust he will, even in these times, find public spirit enough to reward his labours. The work is to be completed in three parts, each containing four plates, accompanied by letter-press, to appear at intervals not exceeding three months.

Gallery of the Society of Painters in Water-Colours. Part IV.
C. Tilt, Fleet Street.

Considering the variety and excellence of this truly British department of art, we may well imagine the difficulty with the managers of this publication can be only that of selection. This is a more arduous task than the unknowing reader might be willing to believe; but we are on this account prepared to give more of our favour to the subjects introduced. The first in the number before us is 'Scene from Twelfth Night' by J. M. Wright, engraved by F. Bacon,—a clever design, but which, however, forces on our memory a contrast with that of Stothard's. The others are 'Evening' by G. Barret, engraved by W. Radclyffe; and 'Yarmouth Roads' by J. S. Cotman, engraved by A. R. Freebairn.

Illustrations of Modern Sculpture. No. I.—Relfe and Unwin,
Cornhill; and C. Tilt, Fleet Street.

Modern Sculpture until now has, among us, owed little or nothing to engraving; and we are glad at length to see some portion of that opprobrium removed, which might be supposed justly falling to our share by the imputation on our national taste which this fact would imply. In the present work we see a prospect afforded us of almost all that we wish for. The selections are made with taste, and the plates are executed with great beauty and delicacy by P. W. Tomkins, W. Finden, and W. T. Fry, after drawings by H. Corbould. The descriptive letter-press, prose and poetry, is entrusted to Mr. T. K.

Hervey, who has given additional proofs in the present number of true poetic feeling. The works first selected are 'The Happy Mother' by Westmacott, 'The Dancing Girl reposing' by Canova, and 'The Mercury and Pandora' from a bas-relief by Flaxman. In the prospectus we are glad to observe the following announcement.

"Should the present work meet with such encouragement as shall offer to its proprietors a fair prospect of being enabled to carry it to a successful conclusion,—it is the intention of the Editor to publish (as a pendant to it,) Biographies of the different Sculptors whose works it may embody, accompanied by Portraits, engraved in the first style of excellence. For this purpose, he is collecting a body of very interesting materials; and his present design is to publish a number every half-year, (two numbers to form a yearly volume,) and each number containing six Lives, with Portraits. The two works will be wholly independent one of the other, and each of them entire in itself. But the Biographies will be printed on Imperial Quarto paper, and, in all respects, uniform with the present work,—for the sake of those who may consider them as giving additional interest to the illustrated specimens, and greater completeness to the general subject."

Encyclopædia of Cottage, Farm, and Villa Architecture. By J. C. Loudon, F.L.S. &c. Part IV.—Longman, Rees and Co.

We noticed this work on its first appearance, and have reason to believe that our observations, though much misunderstood, have assisted in procuring it to be published on a plan more conducive to its proper circulation and general utility. We think it well calculated to extend the knowledge of rural architecture in classes where most needed; and the liberal manner in which it is conducted, makes it fully deserving of the support and aid of the architect, as well as of the public.

Friendship's Offering. Proof Illustrations.—Smith, Elder and Co. Cornhill.

These are the *avant couriers* of those elegant contributions to our *boudoirs* and evening amusements which the winter season now annually brings us. The illustrations to 'Friendship's Offering' will not be found inferior in attraction this year to the last, in designs from the pencils of Martin, Richter, Corbould, J. P. Davis, J. Wood, and others. The literary contents, under the superintendence of the amiable and talented editor, will no doubt be equally excellent.

CONCLUSION.

OUR readers,—a class we are proud to believe, neither small in number, nor uninfluential in character,—will, we take credit to ourselves, join us in the regret that circumstances have at length arisen, compelling us to give up our labours. Should this announcement be considered as made abruptly, we must observe, that the determination was formed as suddenly,—but formed under circumstances which left us no alternative. Commencing our labours at a time when no such events could have been anticipated, we found ourselves involved in the general depression of literature, consequent upon a period of extraordinary political excitement. Still we have laboured, we will assert, with unabated zeal, according to the measure of our abilities, until now; when, in the possession of a degree of public favour, almost sufficient to reward us for every past exertion, we feel compelled, albeit reluctantly, to retire while we can do so with the hope of carrying away with us the regrets of our readers. To struggle even successfully against unfavourable circumstances, is at best a fate which no one will envy; but to struggle unaided, or with that partial aid which was never to be relied on, independent of individual exertions,—to struggle under the pressure of other engagements, and at last under a state of health which forbade all unnecessary occupation whatever, was a task which it was impossible longer to bear. The Editor, therefore, or Proprietor, at whose sole expense this work has been so far carried on, without regard to any other consideration than furthering the interests of Art and the progress of Taste, has no other resource than to take leave of the public, though in so doing he leaves uncompleted many of those wishes which he had perhaps too fondly conceived for the general accomplishment of his scheme.

As the work is intended to be continued, under the form of a New Series, the present Editor feels himself compelled to state, most unreservedly, that he must not in future be considered responsible, as holding any connexion with it whatever. This observation, however, is not intended as in any degree throwing any doubt upon the equal zeal and industry and superior ability which will be brought to the task, but because he feels (it may be allowed) an honest wish not to have his labours mixed up with those of others. The same contributors will be engaged, the same form may be continued, the same line of opinions and principles he hopes will be maintained, with the same strict impartiality towards all schools and systems as well as towards all individuals: but where, as in matters of taste, so much must depend upon the directing mind, it is incumbent upon one who feels so strongly on the subject, to guard against the chance of imputation for wrong, when he has no desire to share the much greater chance which might arise of commendation for increased zeal, industry, or ability.

One point, however, he cannot help naming,—that it has been his constant aim to preserve a certain severe tone of taste in the selection of topics, though in opposition to the unremitting suggestions of his friends and subscribers, who would have had introduced subjects of a lighter and more varied kind, better calculated to please the “paying public.” Whether this policy has been a wise one or not, it is not for him to determine; but as it would have been diametrically opposed to the principles under which he established this work, so he never could consent to lend any aid to the carrying such objects into effect. He feels persuaded, that by this means, what he would have gained in temporary interest he would have lost in permanent solidity and usefulness, and that if even more advantageous at present, he could not consent to accept the benefit at the expense of catering to a vitiated taste. Thus much for announcement. It was still further his wish, had time and health allowed him, to explain at large his views of the present state of the Arts in England and their future prospects, with the best means for their promotion. This, in fact, would have been a concentration of the opinions scattered through different parts of the work, of

which also it would have formed, as it were, the explanation and apology. Abandoning it, however, for the present, he hopes to be enabled soon to offer it to the public as an APPENDIX to this work, with such further observations and suggestions as his knowledge of the interests of Art can supply, and such aid as his name may afford. Should he not be able to realize this hope, he must leave it to these Volumes to effect the ends he had in view. The subject is one which must soon be forced upon the public attention, and will engage the minds of those in every way calculated for the task. Whether, therefore, he joins in it or not, will be a matter of less consequence, though no doubt every offering to the altar of Taste can scarcely fail of being a no unimportant acquisition. At any rate, these volumes prove that we have attempted that which is incumbent upon every good citizen to attempt for the welfare of his fellow-men, individually and collectively. For the support that has been rendered us freely, we believe due acknowledgements have been uniformly made; for that which was purchased, we have but to express our satisfaction at the value of the equivalent. If public attention has been at all called to the subject by our labours,—if we have been at all instrumental in obtaining feeling for Art in the minds of those in whose power it is to promote it,—if we have been the means of affording instruction, or if even we have only been that of preserving the names of a few from utter oblivion, who had deserved better of their countrymen, or afforded only employment for a vacant hour, by furnishing rational amusement,—we shall be satisfied that we have not laboured altogether in vain.

J. K.

Lincoln's Inn,
26th September, 1832.

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END OF THE FOURTH VOLUME.

THOUGHTS
ON
THE PRESENT STATE
OF THE
FINE ARTS IN GREAT BRITAIN.

[Price Two Shillings and Sixpence.]

PRINTED BY RICHARD TAYLOR,
RED LION COURT, FLEET STREET.

THOUGHTS
ON
THE PRESENT STATE
OF THE
FINE ARTS IN GREAT BRITAIN :
WITH
SUGGESTIONS FOR THEIR ADVANCEMENT.
INTENDED AS
AN APPENDIX
TO THE FOURTH VOLUME OF THE
" LIBRARY OF THE FINE ARTS."

" Your Committee cannot dismiss this interesting subject, without submitting to the attention of the House how highly the cultivation of the Fine Arts has contributed to the reputation, character, and dignity of every Government by which they have been encouraged, and how intimately they are connected with the advancement of everything valuable in Science, Literature, and Philosophy."

Report of the Committee on the Elgin Marbles.

LONDON:
PUBLISHED BY M. ARNOLD, TAVISTOCK STREET, COVENT GARDEN.
1833.

DIRECTIONS TO THE BINDER.

VOL. IV.

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THOUGHTS, &c.

THE objects for which the "Library of the Fine Arts" was established as a periodical, seem to have been so little understood, even by some of those whose interests it was principally an attempt to advocate, that it may perhaps be allowed us, in justice to our motives, to devote the introductory part of the following pages to their explanation. Those who happen to be best acquainted with the state of patronage as it exists in this country, and the bent of our popular inclinations, will be first in assenting to the assertion, that any attempt to further the interests of Taste would of a certainty disappoint the expectations of its projectors, unless they were based upon a determination to devote considerable time and incur a considerable expenditure, for that purpose, without any hope of proportionate return. Were there no other ground for such an expectation, it would have been sufficient to reflect that there had been already several publications attempted, having the same objects in view, but without meeting such a degree of success as to warrant their continuation. How far, however, those publications were commenced for public, or merely for private advantage, it is unnecessary here to discuss; though the question is not altogether immaterial, inasmuch as it was with a consideration of such facts that the "Library of the Fine Arts" was established. But those who are desirous of bringing certain opinions before the world will not be deterred from what they feel to be a public duty, by the knowledge of former failures upon collateral questions; and to such persons, if they have the means within their power, no opportunity can be presented more advisable than that afforded by the refinement

of periodical literature. The constant succession of appeals to public consideration it presents, renders it the most favourable medium for obtaining that ultimate success which must attend, in all ages and in all causes, a just perseverance in well doing. That the objects attempted may not always be attained, or, even if attained, that they may not always be discernible, ought not in this view to be a source of discouragement. The consciousness of having performed what they may consider a public duty, will to some minds be a sufficient reward for more misconstruction or non-appreciation of their labours, even than it is probable they will receive from a certainly impartially-judging public. With these sentiments was the "Library of the Fine Arts" commenced;—with these it was continued until the public favour placed it upon such a basis, that the original projector (though in a pecuniary point of view a loser to a very considerable amount,) had the satisfaction of seeing his object answered, by finding it established under circumstances which might enable him to hope for its continuance, and increased prosperity and usefulness. The consideration that it had a reading circle to form,—a sort of public of its own to create,—was of itself a circumstance opposed to the expectation of making it a profitable undertaking; but there was also entertained a higher motive,—to make it the medium of inculcating sounder opinions on Taste, and imbuing the public mind with better-informed ideas, than could perhaps be accomplished by any other means, or was attempted in any other publication. While the other periodicals of the day either gave their principal attention to politics, or digressed into literature only to fill up their pages with its worst characteristics,—while Taste abstractedly, and the Fine Arts as the best practical exemplars, seemed all but unknown to them; it appeared that there was a great desideratum in our literature,—a periodical which should keep clear of all party or polemics, and devote its pages only to those topics which must be most worthy of public attention, for their intrinsic merits, their historical interest, or moral value. Nor was it thought that these must of necessity be devoid of amusement, merely because they were sought to be replete with information. How far we were warranted in this belief, it is now unnecessary to submit to argument, as we have it in our power to refer to what we have

actually effected in the volumes which bear witness to our labours. Without being bound to any particular course, we have there gathered together a number of subjects of biographical and historical value, which in the next generation would in all probability have been, otherwise, entirely forgotten,—and in our critical and argumentative disquisitions, attempted to keep as remote from idle rhapsody and unmeaning foolery on the one hand, as from vulgar tirade and low-minded personality on the other:—thus much we will take upon us to assert, though it be in commendation of our own good deeds. But, in truth, the only reward we have yet to boast of, is this power of self-congratulation; and we owe it in justice to ourselves to add, that we have not altogether failed in the plan with which we commenced, nor in the objects we had in view. These objects, it has already been hinted, were not for the benefit of any particular class of persons, though the Artists seem to have taken that mistaken view of them, and argued and censured us under that mistake. On the contrary, they were to diffuse sounder opinions on questions of Taste throughout the whole community,—including the artists therefore only as a portion of the community, though that portion of it which would more quickly and immediately receive the benefits to be derived from such means.

Having premised thus much in explanation of the objects we had in view, we will at once enter on the subject we have undertaken; namely, to consider the past as well as present condition of the Fine Arts in this country, adding to them such suggestions as appeared to us would be conducive to their advancement and permanent interests.

The history of the Arts in any country is in fact little more than a history of the taste and moral refinement of the people. As these have been more or less developed, in the same proportion have the Arts flourished; and the philosopher or historical observer who wishes to study the one, ought equally to give his best consideration to the other. Each successive age takes to itself credit for an advancement in civilization beyond every age that has preceded it; and if civilization depended only on forms and ceremonies, there might be sufficient warranty in the assumption. But true refinement of taste, which is the best characteristic

of civilization, will not be found to depend altogether on the fashion of the age to confine that quality to its own peculiar notions of manners; it will rather allow it, like the higher morals, to extend over a wider field, and to be amenable to a more impartial tribunal of judgment. The peculiar notions of each age as to refinement of manners, may constitute the refinement of that age, but cannot affect any other; as what may be considered the height of refinement by one nation or one generation, may be viewed in a very different light by another. In these points few persons can be supposed to be very far in advance of their contemporaries; but in refinement of taste as in relation to letters or arts, they may be so according to their habits of thought, as acted upon by the circumstances of their education and powers of observation. Those who have never seen the better works of art, will be content to admire very inferior performances; but as there is a strong natural tendency in the human mind to admire the former, so there is always to be found as strong an innate existing capability to admire most what is most strictly in accordance with good taste. The more educated any persons are, the better able they will be to appreciate the merits of art or literature; but though, in the present age, the wider spread of education and knowledge may have extended the numbers of that class, it may be a question what other advantage we have over our predecessors. The principles of Taste are of necessity ever the same; and we have advanced not in literature beyond the height taken by Shakespeare and his contemporaries, nor, in one important department at least, of art—namely Architecture—beyond those who flourished at a still earlier period of our history.

In Painting, though we have, in proportion to our increased wealth and population, more admirers, and consequently more professors of the art, it may be fairly a matter of dispute whether we are in equal proportion advanced beyond the capabilities of any one generation that has existed within the last two hundred years. Read the catalogue of English artists as recorded by Walpole, and we may have some idea to whom we are in all probability indebted for most of those works which fill our galleries under more fashionable names. Look into the old houses spared by time—or, what is still more to be deprecated, modern

improvements,—and we may see works of art equal almost to any in the present day, on the walls and ceilings, or imbedded in the massy oaken panels, curiously and beautifully carved, so as to throw their modern imitations of gilded frames far into shade;—showing that their then inhabitants made Art the subject of their constant thought and household ornament. Those works alone will be sufficient to prove that there have always been in this country, in the provinces as well as in the metropolis, a number of artists whose fate it was not to have had handed down to posterity as they deserved, the record of their names, as well as the evidences of their talents. It is true they might generally have been foreign artists; but it is also as true, that there were many such of English birth, from the reign of Charles I. until even our own days, whose fates would force upon their successors, if any consideration could force it upon them, how few are destined to share those honours of which “the race is not always to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.”

Without going back to the days of Dobson and Riley,—who, forgotten as they may now be said to be, have no superior in our times,—it would be sufficient to recall to memory the names of those who have passed away from us, almost from before our eyes. Romney, Opie, Hoppner, Owen, and numerous others, may almost be considered our cotemporaries; yet where is the student or the connoisseur to study their works or to trace their manner? Considered, then, with reference to those former masters, it may in no small degree lower the pride of modern attainments to reflect on their future fate, as to be judged from the estimation of those who have preceded us. “Darkness and light,” says the eloquent Sir Thomas Brown in his *Treatise on Urn-burial*, “divide the course of time, and oblivion shareth with memory a great portion even of our living beings. Who can tell if the best of men be known? or whether there be not more remarkable persons forgot than any that stand recorded in the known account of time?” These are startling suggestions, and may lead our thoughts to others no less humiliating to the pride of our intellect. Thus we may consider we have more makers of verses now than had the cotemporaries of Shakespeare;—but have we more poets? So also we have more professors of the art, but have we more

painters than were living in the days of Reynolds? Extended patronage in the one case may have the same effect as extended education in the other; and in both we may feel how little either the one or the other can accomplish, beyond contributing to the vanity of some and the livelihood of others!

Nothing has puzzled those philosophers who puzzle themselves about such matters, more than to account for the sudden appearance in some ages of a congregate of talent, which is found to disappear almost as suddenly; having arisen generally without any extraordinary forcing of patronage, but disappearing for the most part, as decidedly, as soon as subjected to the care of such patronage. It is not our object here to enter into a metaphysical disquisition; but it may be allowed us to remark, that those congregates of extraordinary men are generally found to arise immediately after some period of great public excitement, and that they arise and take their tone as well from the example of some man of superior mind amongst themselves, as from the taste of the age. When one man by the dint or bent of his genius has succeeded in gaining public favour in any remarkable degree, he finds a countless host of competitors anxious to share that favour, and exerting talents not the less great because their possessors had been previously unconscious of them. In the ages of Michael Angelo and Reynolds, the world was astonished to see so many artists of ability arise; and in the days of Shakespeare and Scott, to find the talents of their cotemporaries running into the dramatic or other imaginative productions. Something, perhaps, might be due to what patronage was bestowed on these illustrious individuals; something more to the character of the age in which they lived; but there can be no doubt that the most was due to their extraordinary genius, which not only compelled public opinion to bow down to that genius, but gave an incentive to kindred spirits, though at a humble distance, to follow in the same paths.

Much, too, has been said as to the tendency of patronage, either by princes or academies, to benefit or not the successful pursuit of Art; and if we were to dwell only on past results, and observe how little those have been indebted to either who have best succeeded in obtaining the most undisputed renown, we might at

once acknowledge an end of the question. But it is as indisputable, that we have much yet to learn as to the manner in which we should give assistance in the cultivation of rising, or the labours of existing genius. Mr. Wilkins (than whom no one in the present day is more entitled to the fame he has acquired) has clearly laid down, in his admirable "Letter to Lord Goderich,"* the aim of legitimate and well-judged patronage. Those writers who skirmish on the outskirts of literature, unable to grapple with a great question, and incapable of understanding it when rightly argued, think they are performing prodigies of cleverness if they can carp at some fact or assertion, which, taken singly, may be thought, however mistakenly, to be open to attack. But those who would look at a work with a view to form an impartial judgment, will be justly of opinion, that the whole scope of the work is to be taken into account; and we may thus pronounce the "Letter" now referred to, as equally remarkable for its powerful argument as for its masterly composition. Most of our observations must tend to the same object, namely, the best means to be pursued for the encouragement and benefit of the Arts; and it is for this purpose therefore, to spare going over the same ground, that we refer to his remarks.

The tendency of the argument, any one would perceive who had only ordinary powers of understanding, was to show that what was most wanted, and what had never yet been bestowed,—at least in England,—was *judicious* patronage. To constitute this, the persons referred to, fancy that the purchase of a few pictures, or the grant of a pension, is all-sufficient. But patronage is as distinct from patronizing or pensioning, as charity is from almsgiving: it may be a premium upon idleness; but it cannot call forth powers that do not exist, or, if they do exist, are only to be called forth by the usual incentives to industry.

Academies and the patronage of princes may make respectable painters and scholars; but they cannot confer, nor yet regulate genius, which is generally of such a capricious character that it will even sink beneath the rules adopted to promote it in some cases, while in others it will rise in spite of every obstacle which a superficial observer would have thought sufficient to crush it.

* Republished in Vol. III. of the "Library of the Fine Arts."

Thus, while we observe with respect the care taken by the Governments of France and some other nations to foster the rising talents of their subjects, we observe also to what little effect is all the care taken respecting them. So also in England it may be observed, that though the Royal Academy is founded upon a much sounder system, yet the proportion of those who have risen to any extraordinary eminence in art from among its students, does not exceed in number those who previously flourished, or who have not had that advantage.

Yet still we believe it will never be disputed, that whether our system be carried too far or not far enough, it must be considered superior to the others, inasmuch, at least, as it has been productive of such happier results. Whatever may be the merits of any part of the system, the English School may proudly claim a superiority over every other existing, and, if we except a few individuals, over every School of which we have sufficient data to form an opinion.

This, however, is a subject on which it is extremely difficult to form a right judgment, as we are so liable to be led away by considerations which may prove fallacious. Wilson, though his pictures are now bought up at such increased prices, was neglected in an age when Sandby and Barrett met with the most liberal encouragement; and we ought, perhaps, to ask ourselves, whether there are not many in the present day of as high consideration, who will be as forgotten as those, in the next generation, while the works of some one as neglected as the former, will not be sought with equal avidity? Will not Turner be as much valued by all posterity as he is by his cotemporaries? Can Wilkie ever be forgotten? And will not Collins and Callcott continue to increase in fame as years roll over their works? Or shall we whisper to ourselves any half-felt suspicion that even these may possibly prove, like their predecessors, only the first of a second-rate class of genius, who, though always to be entitled to respect, are to be followed by others destined to hold as high a place in the estimation of their fellows?

Whether it be owing to constitutional coldness, or a want of that aptitude to be created by systems of religious belief, or other causes, we fear it must be acknowledged, that in what is termed

the highest department of art, the Historical, we can have no hope of competing with the great masters of Italy, unless, at any rate, we put ourselves in as nearly as possible the same situation, as to habits and feelings, with those amongst whom the great masters we refer to arose and flourished. They lived among people of high taste by nature;—we should inculcate that taste by education. They imbibed high feeling from their descent, their present as well as their past history, and more than all from their religion;—we ought to assimilate ourselves to these points as much as we may have it in our power, and if we cannot equal them in one respect, endeavour to surpass them in another. This at least we may effect,—and that is, to extend to a greater number the advantages of refinement in Taste, by our greater advantages of wealth and knowledge: and this consideration brings us back again to the question of legitimate and well-directed patronage.

At the first glance it may be asked with some show of plausibility, why those who adopt the pursuit of art or literature as a profession should be made more the subject of patronage and support than those who adopt any of the other pursuits of life? But all who consider the question with a sound statesmanlike judgment, will readily acknowledge the policy of the wisest and best Governments, that have always made those pursuits the objects of their most anxious care. To provide sound moral and religious instruction for the people has always been allowed to be one of the first duties of every Government; and the extension of the patronage is only an extension of the duty, and a question of degree. Were the pursuit, indeed, only one of those to which the attention of the public must of necessity be called as among the ordinary wants of civilized life, we might well allow it to find its own level, accommodating the supply to the demand, without calling for the interference of the legislature. But it is the duty of a statesman to consider the remote advantages of every question, as well as those which immediately press upon us; and in this light we must remember that the benefits accruing to a country from the successful pursuit of art or literature, consist not only in the private advantage to individuals, but also in the extension of better feeling to the whole mass, in the enjoyment of moral pleasures and mental gratification.

Few persons will be found to dispose of their wealth, however superfluous, merely for the sake of rewarding merit. However great may be the talents of any author, and whatever gratification the possessors of wealth and station may have received from his works, how few there are to make the acknowledgement, we shall be at no loss for instances to prove. In Art, though the patronage may be more forced upon those who are desirous of possessing their works, yet there is no doubt that artists, (not including portrait-painters,) as a body, do not receive that consideration or return, which their services to the State would seem to warrant. If the question were one which related only to the individuals, we would not stop a moment to discuss it; for there can be no doubt that every one on entering the busy course of life is bound to consider the advantages or disadvantages which are offered him in it, and if he still chooses to take it, he has no right to complain of the consequences. But in relation to the Arts, the individuals are the least part of the consideration, which ought to be extended to the beneficial effects they bring in their train upon the whole community, and upon the labours of that community, until we see it pervading every operation of their industry and intelligence, and all the ramifications of their manufactures, from the erection of a palace to the pattern of a handkerchief.

Granting, then, the inexpediency of a system of pensioning as a mode of patronage, we must even still more deprecate the opposite system,—either of total neglect which has been followed in this country, or, what is still worse, the making the Arts a stalking-horse for favouritism and jobbing. When the Royal Academy was founded, it is evident that the good intentions of the monarch were not carried so far into effect as he would have desired, had he been allowed to see the end to which the measures tended that were then adopted. But whatever was to be deprecated in that instance, was purity itself when compared with the conduct of those who had the management or the concocting of our misnamed National Gallery. Pictures—bought for what purpose, at whose instance, and for whose particular benefit, it will of course be useless to inquire,—were charged to the public at four times, at least, the price that could possibly have been ex-

pected otherwise to be obtained for them *. They were selected, too, without any reference whatever to the honour of the British School, and placed under the superintendence even of persons who were not distinguished in the Arts, except, perhaps, as far as being dealers. The Government that gave such a National Gallery to the people must be suspected to have had some very different object in view than to encourage British talent, or it would never have kept that talent so completely out of sight, nor have passed over the opportunity which was then presented, of rewarding some of those who had followed the "ungrateful art," and were left in old age comparatively without other hope of reward than the grateful consideration of the State. Stothard was a candidate for the honour of superintendant, (or whatever be the title,) but in vain; and while one of these posts was given to a wholesale picture-dealer, the other was given to a half-pay officer, whose great merit was that of being a relation of a noble lord, one of the dispensers of the patronage!

One of the first suggestions we can make for the interests of Art, is to enable the world to perceive that in all questions connected with it, the claims of our artists shall meet with the first consideration. Thus in the formation of a National Gallery, if any little bargain was to be driven with the Government, it might be hoped that some of our artists might have a share of the public money, either as for their works or from the honorary offices connected with the Institution. But this did not enter into the plans of the projectors, though it ought to be kept in view by artists and their real friends upon all future occasions. Artists may rely upon never receiving any respectful attention either from the Government or the aristocracy, unless they place themselves in a situation to demand and receive it as a right; and they should neglect no means of advancing their claims, either as far as their individual influence will extend, or collectively, as far as they can have it in their power to act together in bringing those claims before the public. This may not be very easy of accomplishment, for they are proverbially a race having a wonderful regard for

* The pictures of the late Mr. Angerstein, thirty-eight in number, were bought of his executors for 57,000*l.*, or an average of 1500*l.* each! Three others were afterwards charged to the public 12,000*l.*!

their individual selves, but little for their brethren or the interests of their art abstractedly from themselves.

One of the greatest benefactors to English art, the late Lord de Tabley, used to remark, that notwithstanding all his endeavours on their behalf, he had never received any acknowledgement from any artist except from Northcote, who had sent a portrait of himself as a present on that account to His Lordship. But had His Lordship heard with other persons' ears, he might have discovered how much the little jealousy which distinguishes little minds had construed, among artists themselves, services so great and so disinterested. In fact, the artists require to be subjected to a system of amendment as well as the public; and one of our principal objects at present is to point out how that amendment can best be carried into effect.

The art of Painting has had no efficient encouragement in England from royalty or the nobility since the reign of Charles I.; and of the patronage it has received, the greater part consisted formerly in the custom of the times to have some device on every house indicative of the occupation of its inhabitant. These signs required and introduced into the practice of the artists a bold style and vigorous handling; and the place of exhibition for their works—no other than Harp-alley, Shoe-lane—used to be crowded with them ready furnished for all trades and fancies. The sums now expended on mahogany fronts to the shop-windows, and plate glass, were then given to the decorative sign-boards; and these swung invitingly over the road, often to the terror of the passengers, until the Marquis of Bute procured the Act forbidding them to extend over the street,—an Act yet remembered by his name, and then considered as giving a fatal blow to the interests of the art*. Notwithstanding this, however, it still continued a strengthening existence, until the genius of Reynolds placed it upon a basis of more honourable and better acknowledged character. Since his day, innumerable artists have appeared, who, so far as mere manual performance can accomplish, have shown that England possessed in sufficient abundance that talent which only required adequate encouragement and attention to produce the happiest results.

* See Library of the Fine Arts, vol. ii. p. 339.

The foundation of the Royal Academy has given to the students the opportunity of study unfettered by too narrow rules, and under the superintendence of persons of whom it would be unfair not to say, that every impartial person must consider them to have fulfilled most scrupulously, to the best of their judgments, the duties required of them. The receipts for the Exhibitions are well known to have been strictly applied for the benefit of the schools which, with singular disinterestedness, they have maintained, as in no other profession exhibited, for the purpose of raising up rivals to themselves,—sure in some cases to dispossess them of public favour, and in all, even sometimes by unwarrantable means, to attempt it. In the schools, and in the lectures given by the Professors, great attention is certainly paid to the instruction of the students; and if the mechanical part of art were all that was necessary, we might be warranted in expecting the English School to exceed even its present capabilities in this department.

But there is something more than this wanting for the perfection of art,—that cultivation of taste and improvement of mind, without which we need never hope to see our artists more than mere copyists. Of course it is impossible to suppose that the “schools” can be engaged in the purposes of education, but that education need not be entirely overlooked, either as regards mere general information, or the inculcating of moral duties. Youth is too apt to overlook the latter; and the former will of a certainty be neglected by them, if neglected also by their proper guardians.

If, therefore, with the premiums for designs or drawings, every year one or two were also given for general good behaviour, and it were understood that they would be remembered in after-life in the competition for future honours, it might perhaps be found that they would not be entirely lost in the conduct of the students generally. So also with regard to the cultivation of their mental powers,—were a premium to be offered for the best thesis upon some subject of taste, or to the student, who upon examination proved himself best to understand the maxims laid down in Sir Joshua Reynolds’s inimitable “Discourses,” for instance, or some other standard work, an incentive would be given to such

cultivation, the fruits of which could not fail to be conspicuous in the future productions of the school.

Whatever may have been the fancies of his biographers, there can be no doubt that Sir Joshua Reynolds was not only the first Painter, but also one of the most accomplished scholars of his day. His father seems to have been a man of very superior mind, who had a great taste for art, as evinced by his having so many different works connected with it in his library,—a circumstance even now rare with country clergymen*. He had intended his son for the profession of medicine, in which not a little learning was required; and though the envy of his contemporaries ascribed the supervisal, if not the writing, of the Discourses to Burke or Johnson, those who will take the trouble to scrutinize the styles of those celebrated personages will find them to differ most materially from Sir Joshua's. Those Discourses are not only suited for the student in art, but also for all persons, as containing maxims applicable to every pursuit in life; not only proving an original and master mind in the author, but that they could not have gone through the process of being prepared for the public by the means of another.

Sir Joshua Reynolds, unhappily, has not yet had a biographer who has done justice to his fame; nor is it probable that such will be found, until some one shall arise possessing all the great qualities for which the illustrious President was distinguished:—neither, until we see more so educated, can we expect the English School to attain the same degree of excellence: for though the ordinary observer may not see much connexion with mind in the composition of a picture, yet it is not the less true, that an artist may have the eye of a painter without the mind of a painter, and may please the world so far with his productions as to make the unlearned not to perceive the deficiency which the wiser few regretted. Thus we may boast of a long catalogue of pleasing pictures and furniture pictures; but we have few indeed which even the most imaginative mind will dwell on with those reminiscences familiar to the true connoisseur, and to which the eye and the memory alike love to recur with constantly renewed delight. This can only be the case with works of the highest

* Library of the Fine Arts, vol. i. p. 42.

excellence and in the first class of art,—the Historical, for which, unfortunately, we have the least demand and the least cultivation.—The next suggestion then appears to be necessary as to the best means of encouraging the cultivation.

The grant of convenient buildings to artists for the purpose of exhibiting their works has been so long adopted with regard to the Royal Academy, that it is unnecessary to point out so unobjectionable a mode of State patronage. The only remark to make upon the subject is, that the propriety of the practice being so admitted, it should be carried into effect in a manner becoming the character and resources of the country. The apartments at Somerset House are in almost every respect as inconvenient, as in external decoration and elevation they are inappropriate for the display of works of national art; and every one therefore, who has a due regard for the national welfare and character, as connected with that welfare, cannot but have hailed with the utmost gratitude the determination of the present Ministry to afford better accommodation for such purposes. Nor would that gratitude forget that this was done at a time when more difficult questions had come before the legislature, and less means, from the distresses of the country, were at their disposal, though they had justly thought that with regard to both those considerations, it was the wisest policy of an enlightened Government to direct the attention of the rich, and the industry of the labouring classes of the country, to those subjects which would best tend to the general welfare of all.

By the grant of more convenient rooms for exhibition, the public attention no doubt would be more directed to the appreciation of the works of art exhibited, and a better market (if we may use the term) be obtained. But it should not be entirely left to the chance patronage of the public, to encourage and reward individual merit. We have a National Gallery containing, no doubt, some most splendid productions of art. Of these, we owe more than half to private beneficence, and the smaller portion to some yet unexplained, and probably never to be explained arrangements, which, if they benefited anybody, certainly did not, as we have already observed, benefit those who had devoted their talents to the practice of the profession.

Other nations have their national collections, but they give encouragement by them to national talent; and a National Gallery here, therefore, should have, for one of its objects at least, the same end in view. When, therefore, the proposed building shall be erected for the works in our National Gallery, one suite of rooms should be appointed for the works of British artists, some *chef d'œuvre* of each of whom should be sedulously sought, as they *have* flourished in this country, and purchasing the best works of living artists only as honours due to extraordinary merit. The diploma pictures of the Academicians might be considered as a sufficient nucleus; but, unfortunately, most of these are not favourable specimens of the artist's talents, each one considering it a tax thanklessly extorted, and not unjustly so, when it is considered how they have been disposed of,—put by in an obscure dirty room, to be exposed to dust and damp, or jumbled among plaster casts, and all the appurtenances of a lumber-room. The task of selection then would still remain, and a wide field indeed would be open for impartial discrimination.

No one of just taste would join in the abuse which some inferior artists, with all the petty jealousy of little minds, have heaped upon those whom they call the "black masters," endeavouring to detract from the merit which they could not equal, so as to bring them down to their own level. The works of the old masters would of course be most desirable as subjects for study and emulation, if they could not be of comparison: but what can be more disheartening to our artists, than to see enormously extravagant prices given for what must almost always be even dubious works of the old masters, while they find the utmost difficulty to obtain a maintenance, merely because they are modern?

One of the greatest incentives to genius to arrive at excellence is the conviction of a certain honourable reward awaiting them, and the means of obtaining general notice to their memory, when that would be all, except their works, left of their existence; and what greater incentive could be afforded, than the knowledge that some one or more of their best works being, if not in their lifetime, certainly after death, if at all deserving of honour, subjected to public criticism and approbation? We allow thousands per annum to add to our stock of butterflies and fossils in the

British Museum, and squander as much more upon still more objectionable trifles; and surely some little may be spared per annum from these, to effect a great national object,—of rewarding talent in a line where private patronage can seldom be expected to flow sufficiently, or reward permanently as well as adequately.

There are few who remember the late Lord de Tabley's collection of paintings but must regret the dispersion of such proofs of native talent, which need not have shrunk from a comparison with almost any collection of the older masters; and if we only call to mind the recollections of our own painters, we shall have no difficulty in coming to the conclusion, that we might find ourselves in possession of greater treasures of art than we even give ourselves credit for. Four or even three thousands per annum allowed for such an object would in the course of a few years, if *honestly* applied, obtain a splendid collection, which would be truly an honour to the national character: nor need it be made an addition to the public burdens; as surely, after so many accumulations to the British Museum, it is impossible that that Institution can now require the continuation of the vast sums annually allotted for its expenditure. Let some curtailment of these expenses be made, and let the arts be permitted to receive some of the benefits now so generously but exclusively devoted to stuffed birds and beasts, and other popular exhibitions of the Museum. Again, public premiums are allotted for the race-course, and bounties are allowed to black and white slavery of all kinds in the production of sugar and cottons:—but the Arts, which afford an embellishment for some of these productions, so great, as often to constitute their principal excellence, are left without even the pretence of public reward, while the Professors are obliged to labour under the disadvantage of using heavily taxed materials for the purposes of their occupations.

Whoever, then, would wish to serve the interests of the community by advancing the interests of Art, must neglect no means of procuring for them such means of reward as would be a stimulus for exertion and excellence; not merely of that kind to catch the fashionable notice and profit of the day, but the more lasting approbation of future times. This, in our view, can most effectually be done by first forming a collection of the best works of

deceased English artists, and afterwards of incorporating among them the works of living artists, under such restrictions as should truly make it an honour to have a memorial there of their talents. What those rules and restrictions should be, it is not necessary for us here to discuss, further than to give as an exemplification, that no work should be received there *as a gift* of any living artist, and that none should be admitted under a stated fixed price as a proportionate reward.

Of the institution of the Royal Academy, it has been very much the fashion of late to speak in terms of disparagement and censure in our periodical publications. As these are intended for the great mass of "general readers," who do not possess any remarkable knowledge of the subject, it perhaps is but common worldly prudence to cater principally to their usual appetite for depreciation of public characters. But surely it is not becoming any one who writes not merely for bread, but for the interests of literature and the community, to throw away the commendations of the better-informed classes, merely to indulge in vulgar and ignorant vituperation.

No body of men, constituted like the Royal Academy, can expect always to escape the attacks of those whose conceit is greater than their ability, and their rank in public estimation therefore lower than their expectations. But every one who has given an impartial consideration to the conduct of the members of the Academy must acknowledge, that though there has been much unjust obloquy cast upon them, they have in some measure brought it upon themselves, by too great confidence in their own rectitude, and too little appreciation of the mischief which even unjust charges will occasion. The public mind is decidedly opposed to all close, self-elected, irresponsible corporations; and surely when so little is to be given up by the Academy of what is really available, it must be a proof of most impolitic pertinacity to cling to what only occasions ill-will. The privilege of painting upon their pictures after they are arranged for exhibition, denied to those not members of the Academy, must be acknowledged to be indefensible, while that of being allowed each to send so many pictures to take up the best places is not less ungracious. The number of Academicians even now

cannot be said to be too few; but when artists have increased so many since the founding of the Academy, the number of Associates surely might also be increased without disparagement to those now in possession of that honour; while if the Associates were brought more into power, so as to make the Institution more popular in its character, there can be no doubt that its estimation in the public opinion would be proportionably higher. Let the members also reduce the number of their pictures sent to the Exhibition, so as to give a better chance to their humbler brethren who are struggling for the eminence they have already attained; and they would thus obviate the ill-feeling which arises in the minds of many who have their pictures returned, or placed in situations where it is impossible for them to obtain a favourable notice. Still, however, as means are at present allowed, it would always be impossible to do justice, and much less to give satisfaction to all.

In the proposed new building, better accommodation may be afforded for exhibition; but it is scarcely to be supposed that more space can be obtained; and if it were, it would still be a question how far it would be advisable to distract attention by too great a display. It is owing perhaps to this,—but certainly there is one part of the Exhibition, namely, of the Architectural designs, which receives little or no notice from the public, and almost as little from the Committee, who arrange them apparently according to their colouring and frames, without any regard to the talent they indicate. Of these a distinct Exhibition * might advantageously be made, or in conjunction with miniatures, enamels, and other such appendages of art, which, if it should not attract so great a number of visitors as the principal Exhibition, could scarcely fail of becoming sufficiently popular to have an important influence upon public taste. The difficulty at present existing, of the rooms being wanted for the use of the schools, would be obviated by the possession of rooms exclusively for exhibition, which at other times of the year should be permanently open to the public, with a view of such works of our own artists as has been before suggested for a National Collection.

The Academicians, it is well known, have been in the habit of

* See a clever paper on this subject, *Library of the Fine Arts*, vol. iv. p. 213.

defending the practice as to their exhibition, by declaring that it is one of their own works, to which the works of others are only admitted by sufferance, and probationary to the admission of the authors into their body. But this is, in our opinion, one of those instances of self-delusion which are only common in honourable minds when mixed up unconsciously with considerations of pride and self-interest. Had the Royal Academy been indebted for its origin to its first members as a matter of private speculation, like the Water Colour Society, it might take credit to itself for its superior liberality with much justice. But when we consider that it was in fact a National Establishment for public objects,—established, if not supported, at a cost not defrayed from its own resources,—it must be considered to have been invested with a public character, for the promotion of public objects rather than private interests. We may grant, then, that the funds at its disposal have been righteously managed in respect to the schools, the students, and the annuitants;—we may grant that the election of new members has, at least in all the later cases, been unexceptionable, and that the opportunities given to exhibitors not members, have not been more partial than was warranted by their constitution;—still, if we do not find there that publicity as to all transactions, and that open election and fair extension of privileges to the great body of artists, reserving the honours only to the most deserving, it will be impossible to expect that satisfaction which ought to attend the due observance of a public duty.

As to the advisability of an Academy at all, there have been many reasonings, which it is not our plan here to discuss at any length. But it may be allowed us to observe, that any arguments drawn from the fact of artists of superior ability having been found to arise who have not been indebted to any Academy for their instruction, are truly indicative of shallow consideration if directed against such institutions, and are only to be met by a reduction *ad absurdum*. In this point of view we must give up the Universities, because many of our best mathematicians and scholars were not indebted to them for their education; and even all systems of education, because so many have arisen to eminence untaught! The Arts more than any other branch of human attainment are most likely to succeed without the advantage of

instruction; and it is truly a subject of pride to the Royal Academy, that the disinterested efforts of its members have effected the development of so much talent among the students. There is scarcely one artist of the *present* generation, of any note, but who has studied at the Royal Academy,—and with what success can only be judged by those who have compared *our* School with that of any other nation *now* flourishing. It may be very easy to say that Rome, Venice, and Florence alone, produced more artists than England has done: but give the artists of England the same time and the same fair play, and we need not then be afraid to meet a comparison with the aggregate, though it would not be fair to enter into a comparison with individuals.

The talent displayed by English artists has been quite sufficient to prove that they only wanted happier circumstances, to place them on the highest pedestal of artistic fame. But those circumstances will never arise until we are enabled to imbue the people, and especially the wealthier classes, with that feeling and taste for high art which characterized the people with whom it flourished in the highest degree. Of the nations of antiquity, we have too few data to form an opinion; but in later times we have seen sufficient to estimate the advantages other nations have possessed over us.

In modern Italy there was not only the remembrance of former fame, and the remains of former superiority in art as well as in arms, but there was also a climate particularly calculated to call forth those finer feelings which would give to the works of art their highest characteristics, with the influence of a religious belief still more powerful and efficacious. Here, then, we find all the accessories to success in art, which, encouraged by judicious patronage, was sure to produce works of a higher character than could be expected in any less fortunate combination of circumstances.

France possessed none of these advantages, except the climate—not even the depth of national character; consequently she has never produced either a superior painter or a superior poet. Spain, on the contrary, had a romantic national history, and the people had a highly sensitive national character. They had the same deep religious feeling which could not but actuate every class of the community; and accordingly, notwithstanding the

drawbacks of a gloomy capricious despotism, to which they have been, from the disposition of their monarchs, singularly subjected, they have produced both painters and poets of the highest order, such as not even that despotism could depress. The other nations of the Continent have had no other favourable incentive to excellence, but the common feeling for and love of art, inseparable from educated minds. We find among them therefore artists, though of first-rate ability so far as manual dexterity extends, yet not one of that higher order to carry away our feelings and passions, so as to make us forget the individual performance in its associations and character.

England alone, of the Northern nations, has shown any such capabilities. Our historical recollections, if not of so stirring a nature as those of Spain and Italy, are sufficiently so to rouse our national pride; while the depth of the national character in other respects is such as to call forth all the higher feelings, and impart their strength to all the productions of national genius. Nothing, in fact, is wanting but a judicious patronage, or, what is the same thing, a right understanding and just taste in our rulers and aristocracy.

Among these, however, we find an ignorance of, and an inattention to, the Arts, which, compared with the appreciation of them by the middle and lower classes, is truly lamentable. The less wealthy classes flock to the Exhibitions, which the high and titled neglect; they patronize Art in the purchase of engravings, and, as far as their means allow, in the purchase of paintings, as the sale-books of the British and Suffolk Street Galleries attest; while of all our thousand nobles and other aristocracy, if we find one in the possession of a gallery, it is probably only as an heir-loom. The printsellers buy at least three times as many pictures to engrave for the public, as all our nobility put together, and accordingly we find the art of engraving is flourishing. The only drawback to it is, that the publishers, seeing the desire of the public to possess prints which, to be placed within their reach, must be offered at a low price, are compelled to have them executed in a style which will allow of a large number of impressions being struck off; consequently all the beauty of the middle tint, and all the fine gradations of tone, are sacrificed to

the more powerful opposition of black and white. Thus the public eye at length becomes vitiated by its very indulgence, and the engraver no longer considers it necessary to study the perfection of his art, but what will best pay him for his labour.

In the same way, our artists think not of painting for the galleries of the high and wealthy, but of sketching for the annuals and the printshops; they sell their hope of fame, for the certainty of present remuneration. Sculpture, which only can come in its higher walks within the means of the wealthy, is even still more neglected; as it is with them thought of only for busts and monumental effigies, which again are made, under their superintending care, most befitting ornaments to those miserable abortions of our architectural taste—the modern churches. In every point of view the people are prepared to receive and to admire what is most excellent; it is the aristocracy alone that stand between them and that excellence, and make them pay the penalty of *their* bad taste.

Our last suggestion, then, remains as to the best means of extending that taste for art among the higher and wealthier classes, which would be the best means of encouraging art by increasing the number of its patrons, and creating a greater demand for its productions. This suggestion is, the founding a Professorship at one of the Universities, which, if it should prove successful, might be extended to the other.

The late Lord Viscount Fitzwilliam, in founding the Museum now bearing his name, in the University of Cambridge, also bequeathed ample means for the proper maintenance of his munificence. These revenues (about 3000*l.* per annum) are by his will left sufficiently at the disposal of the University to procure the appointment of a Fitzwilliam Professor of the Fine Arts, whose lectures would not interfere, as some other lectures might be supposed to do, with the studies of the University, but, on the contrary, might be made to harmonize most gracefully and usefully with them. All that would be wanting would be a judicious appointment, to make the series so attractive, as could not fail to have a most beneficial influence on public taste, and, consequently, on English art. Could this not be effected in the manner here suggested, we would ask, How could the Government employ a

few hundreds per annum more becomingly than in founding a Regius Professorship with the same object? Where could an audience be found more worthy of receiving the lessons of Taste? and whence could those lessons be imparted to the whole empire more effectively?

The technical instructions of a drawing-master of course would be out of place: what would most be required, after imbuing the minds of the youthful aristocracy with a taste for high art, would be to warn them against the impositions of empiricism to which they are at present so exposed, and which, eventually, turn them from any natural inclination to judicious patronage. The tricks of the dealers and the auction-rooms cannot be too strongly pointed out to the unguarded, nor the assiduities of those who have nothing else to recommend them. Thus should we begin at the fountain-head a task of clearing away the imperfections, without which we may labour much and find it in vain in our present relations of society.

Such, then, are our suggestions: 1. To reform our students by affording them the means of a more liberal education, and inciting them to that degree of mental culture which will elevate them in society, at the same time that it will furnish their minds with ideas, and, consequently, with nobler subjects for the employment of their talents.

2. To reform—with great deference be it spoken—our artists also, by affording them the means of having their works brought more prominently and favourably before the public, and giving them the certainty of public criticism, and permanent honour if deserving of it.

3. By obtaining for them a better market, if we may repeat the phrase, for their works, and a race of purchasers more able to appreciate them; at the same time that we should attract to their merits from the high-born and wealthy, that attention which should be given to such considerations from the rulers of a great and civilized community.

Such are the principal suggestions we have had to offer; what other ideas have arisen in the course of our discussion, have been only subsidiary to these principal objects. We have abstained as much as possible from all questions merely of a transitory

nature; but we cannot refrain from congratulating the world of Art, that their interests are now, notwithstanding the general state of disorder throughout the empire, in so favourable a train for the full attainment of public consideration. A Ministry, perplexed with questions more momentous than ever were before at one time forced on the legislature, and at a period of greater financial difficulties than was ever known, has been found enlightened enough to perceive that a just and liberal patronage of Art was strictly consistent with the wisest economy. A new building in honour of their merits has been entrusted to an architect whose works at Cambridge, and in the University of London, lead us to expect that it shall be such a one as will do credit to the age, of which every incident in history will excite the most intense curiosity. The Academy has done itself justice in the choice of a President who will make the office respected by his varied talents,—to which indeed he owes his elevation,—more even than by the honours which can be conferred upon it. Nothing will be found wanting but a generous co-operation between the artists themselves and those who have no other private interest connected with them, except a common fondness for their pursuits, to make the English School worthy of the English character.

THE END.

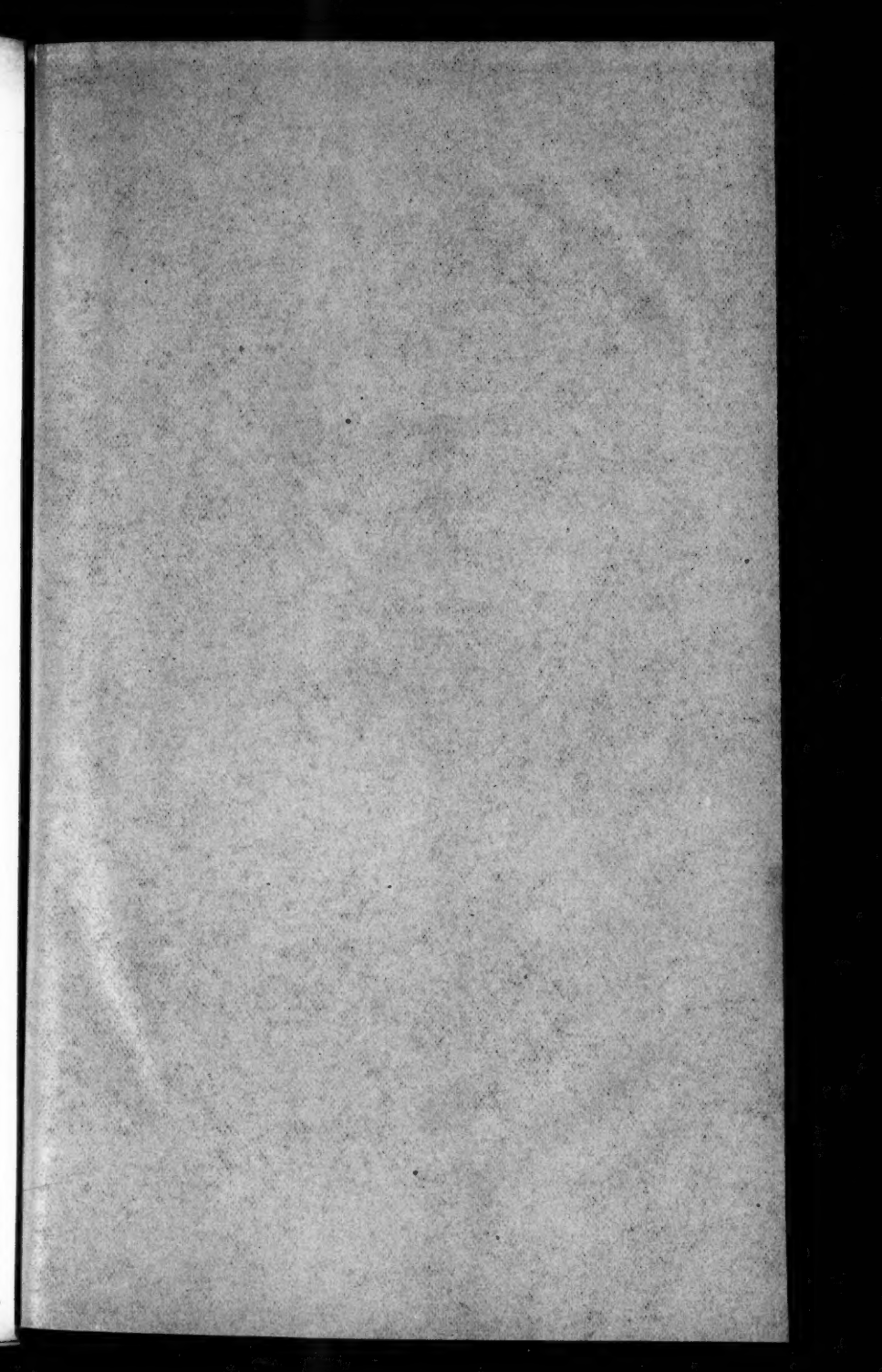


J. Opie R.A. pinx.

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John Opie

Library of the Fine Arts, 1832.





LECTURES

ON

PAINTING,

DELIVERED AT

THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF ARTS, LONDON,

BY

JOHN OPIE, Esq., R.A.,

LATE PROFESSOR OF PAINTING TO THE ROYAL ACADEMY:

ALSO

A LETTER ON THE PROPOSAL FOR A PUBLIC MEMORIAL OF
THE NAVAL GLORY OF GREAT BRITAIN.

LONDON:

PUBLISHED BY M. ARNOLD,

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SIMPKIN AND MARSHALL, STATIONERS' COURT; W. F. WAKEMAN,
DUBLIN; AND OLIVER AND BOYD, EDINBURGH.

1832.

LECTURES

PREFACE

PATENTING

THE GREAT ADVANCEMENT OF ARTS, LONDON.

LONDON:

PRINTED BY RICHARD TAYLOR,
RED LION COURT, FLEET STREET.



PREFACE.

JOHN OPIE was born in May 1761, in the parish of St. Agnes, about seven miles from Truro. His father was a respectable country carpenter, whose ambition would have been well satisfied by bringing up his son to earn an honest livelihood in his own calling. But Opie had been gifted by nature with powers of mind, as well as an aptitude for Art, superior to the generality of mortals, and the father was obliged to submit to the inevitable fate which was to render his name for ever immortal, if immortality was to be attained by eminent success in Art, as well as the affording strong proofs of observation and thought in literary composition. Opie's Life has been written with characteristic feeling by his widow, whose literary labours have thrown still further celebrity on his name; and more recently by Mr. Allan Cunningham, in his "*Lives of the most eminent British Painters*"*. It is, therefore, the less necessary for us to enter into the details of private life, which those desirous of learning may so readily obtain by a reference to either Biography. Our object is merely to give to the student, whose means may not be compatible with high prices, a work eminently useful for studious meditation at the cheapest possible price. The Lectures of Opie, like those of Reynolds, are not of a class to be borrowed from a library to be returned at the end of a few days; they ought to be pocket companions in the journeys of the student, and open to frequent reference in his hours of leisure at home. The struggles of his early life, and the history of his disappointments and successes afterwards, may be easily borne in the mind for instruction and encouragement as well as for mere amusement; but the precepts he has laid down from experience, and the observations from a vigorous habit of thought, must be the subjects of frequent meditation and reference.

* See Library of the Fine Arts, vol. i. p. 37.

He died April 9th, 1807, and was buried on the 20th in St. Paul's cathedral, near Sir Joshua Reynolds.

His merits as a painter it is almost as unnecessary for us here to discuss as his character in private life: it will be sufficient to observe, that they are alike to be characterized by a manly *breadth*, and freedom from affectation, which perhaps owe much of their merits as well as their demerits to the circumstances of his early life,—his untutored efforts and his unassisted struggles. Academic rules and forms of society might have detracted from, they could scarcely have improved, the native *raciness* of his peculiar characteristics.

He was elected Professor of Painting in 1805, upon Fuseli's being appointed Keeper. It was in this character he delivered the following Lectures, which, however, were but part of a system of professional instruction he was unhappily prevented from continuing by a fatal disease, which seems to have been little understood, and which terminated in his premature decease at the age of 46.

"In his first lecture," says Mr. Hoare, to whose care the manuscripts were entrusted for publication, "he will be found to have divided the subject of his Art into six branches; four of which he calls the Practical or Physical elements of Painting; and the other two, the Intellectual. The former are; *Design*, or *Drawing*; *Colouring*; *Chiar'-oscuro*; *Composition*: the latter, *Invention*; *Expression*."

The present Lectures treat; the 1st, of *Design*; the 2nd, of *Invention*; the 3rd, of *Chiar'-oscuro*; the 4th, of *Colouring*.

OPIE'S LECTURES.

LECTURE I.—*Read at the Royal Academy, February 16, 1807.*

GENTLEMEN,—IF the difficulties of your professor's task have always been at least equal to the honour of his situation, they must surely at present be allowed to preponderate considerably, by his having to come after one to whom all sources of knowledge were open, who, to a mass of well digested materials, possessed by none but himself, joined an imagination capable of illustrating and enlivening the driest subject, and placing it in the most various and striking points of view, and the force of whose eloquence must have made an indelible impression on all who ever had the pleasure of hearing it.

Such indeed is the magnitude of the undertaking, that, though I have practised long and studied much, I should shrink from it in despair, did I not hope to find you prepared almost to anticipate every advice, eager to catch every hint, and ready to second my endeavours with earnest and unceasing diligence. Aided by such a disposition on your part, I have no doubt that even my feeble powers may do much; but you must always remember that the responsibility for your progress does not lie wholly with me. If you are wanting to yourselves, rule may be multiplied upon rule, and precept upon precept in vain, and all the talents of all the professors that ever lived, far from rendering you any essential service, would only tend to cover you with deeper and more irrecoverable disgrace.

What I have to offer, will in general be found to correspond with the opinions of those who have written on the subject before: sometimes, however, I have ventured to leave the beaten track; but I can honestly say, that it has never happened through negligence, caprice, or vanity.—Truth, not novelty, has invariably been my object; and, in order more effectually to arrive at this point, I now give notice that if any gentleman, student or otherwise, will have the goodness to set down any doubts or objections he may have as to the clearness or soundness of any point I insist on, and communicate them to me, I will next year, if not before, endeavour to satisfy him by a further explanation, or by retracting my opinion if I find it untenable.

The writers on painting seem in general not less solicitous than those on most other arts, of tracing it back to the remotest periods of antiquity; some ascribing it to divine, others to human origin, some giving it an antediluvian birth, whilst others are content to take it up on this side the Deluge, and warm themselves in settling the pretensions of the Chaldeans, Egyptians, Persians, Indians and other early nations, to the honour of having been its first parents and protectors.

Having neither leisure nor inclination to enter into disputes which promise to be as endless as unproductive of anything beneficial either in regard to the theory or practice of the art, I shall confine myself to such observations on its origin, as rise naturally from considering its principles, without reference to historical evidence of any kind whatever.

The rudiments of painting appear to me so congenial to the mind of man, that they may almost be said to be born with it. The art is a language that must exist, in some greater, or less degree, whenever the human intellect

approaches a certain, and that by no means an elevated, standard. Instead, therefore, of asking where it *was*, I should be more inclined to ask where it *was not* invented, as the more difficult question to solve: for on the slightest consideration it cannot but be obvious, that men in the earliest, and every period, *must* (from natural causes) have been impressed with an idea of the elements of art. The shadows of plants, animals, and other objects on a plain, the prints of feet in the dust or sand, and the accidental resemblance of lines and patches of colour to faces and human figures, must have given rise to the conception, and pointed out the possibility of imitating the appearances of bodies by lines and colours.—Thus nations in which society appears to be scarcely beyond its infancy, possess the first rudiments of design before they are acquainted with those of many other arts more useful, and almost necessary to their existence; their naked bodies are covered with punctures of various forms, into which indelible colours of various kinds are infused,—whether for ornament or use, to delight their friends, or terrify their enemies, is not easy to determine.

After this first step, the next demand for the art would undoubtedly be to communicate and transmit ideas, to preserve the memory of warlike exploits and remarkable events, and to serve the purposes of piety or superstition; it being a much more obvious and natural expedient to form some picturesque representation of a person or action, than to attempt to give an account of them by means of abstract signs and arbitrary characters; and hence probably are derived the picture-writing of the Mexicans, and the more artful hieroglyphics of the Egyptians.

But though the arts of design are among the first that make their appearance after those absolutely necessary to preserve life, they are perhaps always the very last that reach perfection: with an almost inextinguishable principle of vitality, they yet require the fervid warmth of the acme of civilization to expand them to their full size, and give them to bear fruits of the highest flavour.

The progress of the arts in every country is the exact and exclusive measure of the progress of refinement: they are reciprocally the cause and effect of each other; and hence we accordingly find that the most enlightened, the most envied, and the most interesting periods in the history of mankind are precisely those in which the arts have been most esteemed, most cultivated, and have reached their highest points of elevation. To this the bright arras of Alexander the Great and Leo the Tenth owe their strongest, their most amiable, and their most legitimate claims to our respect, admiration, and gratitude; this is their highest and their only undivided honour; and, if not the column itself, it is certainly (to borrow a metaphor from a celebrated orator) the Corinthian capital of their fame.

The principles of painting comprehend those of all the other arts of design, and indeed of everything in which the imagination or the passions are immediately addressed through the organs of sight. In this art, (the simplest in its means, and the most powerful in its effect,) by the mere application of lines and colours, a flat surface is made to recede or project at the will of the artist; he fills it with the most agreeable appearances of nature, and sets before our eyes the images we hold most dear. The empire of the art extends over all space and time: it brings into view the heroes, sages, and beauties of the earliest periods, the inhabitants of the most distant regions, and fixes and perpetuates the forms of those of the present day; it presents to us the

heroic deeds, the remarkable events, and the interesting examples of piety, patriotism, and humanity of all ages; and, according to the nature of the action depicted, it fills us with innocent pleasure, excites our abhorrence of crimes, moves us to pity, or inspires us with elevated sentiments.

Nor are its powers limited by actual or bodily existence; the world of imagination is all its own. It ascends the brightest heaven of invention, and selects and combines at pleasure whatever may suit its purpose.—All that poets yet have feigned, or fear conceived, of uncreate or unembodied being, is subject to its grasp; and most truly may it be said to

..... give to airy nothing
A local habitation and a name.

Painting, we are told, consisted, in its infancy, of mere outlines, and probably for a long time very little exceeded what we now see scrawled in a nursery by children who have never been taught to draw: the next step of the art was to the *monogram*, or the addition of some parts within the contour; from thence it advanced to the *monochrom*, or paintings of one colour; and to this quickly succeeded the *polychrom*, or the application of various colours, performed by covering the different parts of the picture with different hues, much in the same way as we now colour maps; and beyond this the art has never advanced among nations of the East, even to the present time.

But in Greece, happy country! all causes were combined in favour of the progress of the art, as if nature was determined to show for once what the human powers, aided by every circumstance, were capable of accomplishing. Painting was there received with enthusiasm, liberally encouraged, and persued by a succession of the mightiest geniuses the world ever saw, who, with incredible rapidity, completed its elements, by the addition of light and shade to colour, and of action to form, and of expression to action, and composition to expression, and grace to composition: every delicacy of execution and mechanical skill crowned the whole, and the art, in their hands, became adequate to the representation of all that is grand, beautiful, terrific, or pathetic in nature: nor did they stop here; like our immortal bard,

Each change of many-colour'd life they drew,
Exhausted worlds and then imagin'd new;
Existence saw them spurn her bounded reign,
And panting Time toil'd after them in vain.

In short, they not only surpassed all that went before, but have equally baffled every attempt at successful rivalry since. From them all that exists of true beauty, grace, and dignified character, in the works of the moderns, not only in painting and sculpture, but in everything that relates to design, is borrowed. All that is well-proportioned, grand, and striking in our architecture, all that is agreeable in the forms of our utensils and furniture, and all that is tasteful and elegant in the dress of our females, is derived immediately from them; and but for them even beauty in nature itself would perhaps at this time have been undiscovered, or so far misunderstood, that we might have preferred the artificially crippled form and sickly corpulence of a Chinese, or the rank and vulgar redundancy of a Flemish or Dutch female.

Nature, as it presents itself to the eye, consists of form, colour, and light and shadow: exactly answerable to these, the principal branches of painting

consist likewise of drawing, colouring, and *chiar' oscuro*; and as the eye can take in, at once, but a certain portion of nature, the art has another branch to regulate the quantity and disposition of the parts of this portion, called *composition*. These four constitute the practical or physical elements of painting; and their immediate purpose is to produce illusion, deception, or the true bodily effect of things on the organs of sight. And as by the phenomena of form, colour, and light and shade, nature makes us acquainted with all her superior and more interesting qualities, so the corresponding branches of painting, through the medium of invention and expression, (the soul of the art,) are made the vehicles of our conceptions of sublimity, beauty, grace, mind, passion, and character.

Invention and expression, being purely intellectual branches, justly bear in consequence a more elevated rank and degree of estimation; but it must never be forgotten that they cannot exist alone; perfection in them presupposes perfection in the humbler and more mechanic parts, which are the instruments, the language of the art: without these a man is no painter; and however extraordinary, abundant, brilliant, or refined his ideas, they must die with him; at least he can never manifest them to the world by painting.

To know an art thoroughly, we must know its object, which, in regard to painting, is not quite so easy as it appears at first: for though all agree that its purpose is to imitate nature, yet the vast superiority possessed by many works of art over others equally challenging to be considered as true and faithful representations of nature, shows that some limitation and explanation of this very extensive and complicated term is necessary to our forming a correct idea of its meaning in respect to art; without which it will be vain to hold it up as a standard or measure of the various merits of the different works in painting.

The gross vulgarity and meanness of the works of the Dutch; the pert frivolity and bombast of the French; the Gothic, dry and tasteless barbarism of the old German, as well as the philosophic grandeur of the Roman school, may all be equally defended on the ground of their being strong and faithful representations of nature of some sort or other. In real objects also, the base and the refined, the dross and the metal, the diamond in its rough pebble state, as well as when polished, set, and presented in its brightest blaze, the *goitre* of the Alps, as well as the most perfect beauty, are all equally nature:—but who ever thought them equally proper subjects for the pencil?

In taking a general view and comparing the productions of art, they will be found easily divisible into three distinct classes, formed upon three distinct principles or modes of seeing nature, and indicative of three distinct ages, or stages of refinement, in the progress of painting. First, those of which the authors, agreeing with Dryden that "God never made his works for man to mend," and understanding nature as strictly meaning the visible appearances of things, (any alteration of which would at least be unnecessary and impertinent, if not profane,) have, in consequence, confined themselves to the giving, as far as in them lay, an exact copy or transcript of their originals, as they happened to present themselves, without choice or selection of any kind as to the manner of their being. Secondly, those in which the artists, departing a little from this bigotry in taste, have ventured to reject what they considered as mean and uninteresting in nature, and endeavoured to choose the most perfect models, and render them in the best point of view. The third class would consist of the works of those who, advanced another step

in theory, have looked upon nature as meaning the general principles of things rather than the things themselves, who have made the imitation of real objects give way to the imitation of an idea of them in their utmost perfection, and by whom we find them represented not as they actually are, but as they ought to be.

This last stage of refinement, to which no modern has yet completely arrived, has been called the ideal, the beautiful, or the sublime style of art. It founds its pretensions to superiority on the very superior powers required to excel in it, and on the infinitely greater effect, both as to pleasure and improvement, which it is calculated to produce on the mind of the spectator; and hence the pure, simple, energetic and consistent principle on which it rests, is indubitably to be considered as the true and real interpretation of the term *nature*, always to be kept in view, not only by all who would excel in painting, but by all who wish to attain the highest style in any of the imitative arts.

Many painters and critics, from observing the difficulty of settling the proper meaning of the term *Nature*, have thought fit to substitute *beauty* in its stead, as the immediate object of the great style of art. But beauty being a word to the full as indefinite, if not as complex, as the word *nature*, we shall not be surprised to find that many painters of no mean abilities have been led into very fatal mistakes from erroneous and inadequate conceptions of its meaning: we shall not be surprised at the *namby pamby* style of many of the works of Albano; we can hence account for the *manner* and affectation of Guido, who, understanding the term in too confined a sense, thought he was of course to paint, on every occasion, the handsomest woman possible; and taking accordingly, in *his* opinion, the most beautiful antique statue for his model, he constantly repeated in his works the same face, without variation of expression or character, whatever was the subject, situation, or action represented: whether a Venus or a Milkmaid, the Assumption of the Virgin, the Death of Cleopatra, or Judith cutting off the head of Holofernes. This principle has also evidently been the great stumbling-block of the whole French school, to which it owes the larger share of its absurdity and insipidity, its consumptive languor, and its coquettish affectation.

I will not undertake the perilous task of defining the word *beauty*; but I have no hesitation in asserting that when beauty is said to be the proper end of art, it must not be understood as confining the choice to one set of objects, or as breaking down the boundaries and destroying the natural classes, orders, and divisions of things (which cannot be too carefully kept entire and distinct); but as meaning the perfection of each subject in its kind, in regard to form, colour, and all its other associated and consistent attributes. In this qualified and, I will venture to say, proper acceptance of the word in regard to art, it may be applied to nearly all things most excellent in their different ways. Thus we have various modes of beauty in the statues of the Venus, the Juno, the Niobe, the Antinous, and the Apollo;—and thus we may speak, without exciting a confusion of ideas, of a beautiful peasant, as well as of a beautiful princess, of a beautiful child, or a beautiful old man; of a beautiful cottage, a beautiful church, a beautiful palace, or even of a beautiful ruin.

The discovery or conception of this great and perfect idea of *things*, of nature in its purest and most essential form, unimpaired by disease, unmutated by accident, and unsophisticated by local habits and temporary fashions, and the exemplification of it in practice, by getting above individual imitation,

rising from the species to the genus, and uniting, in every subject, all the perfection of which it is capable in its kind, is the highest and ultimate exertion of human genius.—Hitherto shalt thou go, and no further—every step in every direction from this pole of truth is alike retrograde—for, to generalize beyond the boundaries of character, to compose figures of no specific age, sex, or destination, with no predominant quality or particular end to be answered in their construction, is to violate propriety, destroy interest, and lose the very essence of beauty in contemptible nothingness and insipidity.

Conceptions of beauty or perfection take place involuntarily in the mind, through the medium of that wonderful and powerful principle, the association of ideas: but they will be very far from distinct or correct, unless we also employ much study of the laws of nature, investigate closely her methods of attaining her purposes, observe accurately her rules of proportion, and how they are varied in every department of character, develop the connexion of mind with matter, trace their reciprocal effects on each other, and learn, in all cases, to distinguish the harmonious, consistent, and energetic, from the absurd, superfluous, and inefficient combinations of parts and principles.

As the most fashionable and approved metaphysicians of the present day seem inclined to deny the existence of general ideas, I shall not contend for the propriety of applying that term to ideas formed on the principles I have been mentioning; but under whatever denomination they may be classed, it cannot be denied that they are the true and genuine object of the highest style of painting. Poetry, though unlimited in its field of description, and omnipotent as the vehicle of relation and sentiment, is capable of giving but faint sketches of form, colour, and whatsoever else is more immediately addressed to the sight; and the drama, however impassioned and interesting, can only exhibit form and motion as they actually exist: but the utmost conceivable perfection of form, of majesty of character, and of graceful and energetic action, have no physical existence; they are born, bred, and reside in the human imagination only, never to be drawn from thence but by the hand of the consummate artist, working on the sublimest principles of his art. Here it may be necessary to notice that the term *ideal*, like those of nature and beauty, has probably been the source of very great and grievous errors. Instances have occurred of some, who have even been so absurd as to think colouring, *chiar' oscuro*, and all that contributes to illusion in painting, as beneath their attention: who, because they have heard that nature might be improved upon in some particulars, have fondly imagined that their compositions approached the heroic and poetical in proportion as they receded from nature and became muddy, tame, and monotonous in the effect; forgetting that the ideal has reference to the forms, character, choice and congruity only of things, and not at all to the rendering the appearance of them with truth, vivacity, and energy to the eye; in which art is so far from being capable of excelling nature, that, with her best efforts, she must ever remain at an immeasurable distance behind.

How colouring and effect may and ought to be managed, to enliven form and invigorate sentiment and expression, I can readily comprehend and, I hope, demonstrate; but wherein these different classes of excellence are incompatible with each other I could never conceive: nor will the barren coldness of David, the brick-dust of the learned Poussin, nor even the dryness of Raffaele himself, ever lead me to believe that the flesh of heroes is less like flesh than that of other men; or that the surest way to strike the

imagination, and interest the feelings, is to fatigue, perplex, and disgust the organ through which the impression is made on the mind.

Let it, therefore; be always understood that the end of painting, in its highest style, is twofold: first, the giving effect, illusion, or the true appearance of objects to the eye; and, secondly, the combination of this with the ideal, or the conception of them in their utmost perfection, and under such an arrangement as is calculated to make the greatest possible impression on the spectator.

With such purposes in view, consisting of such a multiplicity of parts, and requiring such an uncommon assemblage of powers, mechanical and mental, of hand, of eye, of knowledge, of judgement, of imagination, and of indefatigable perseverance in study and practice to enable a man to perform any one part with tolerable success, it can be no wonder that the art has not as yet, in modern times at least, reached the desired perfection; nor ought we to be surprised to find even the most celebrated masters materially defective in some one or more of its branches,—those who possessed invention, having been frequently deficient in execution; those who studied colouring having often neglected drawing; and those who attended to form and character, having been too apt to disregard composition, and the proper management of light and shadow. The whole together, indeed, seems almost too great for the grasp of human powers, unless excited, expanded, and invigorated by such enthusiastic and continued encouragement as that which exclusively marks the bright æra of Grecian taste.

Impressed as I am at the present moment with a full conviction of the difficulties attendant on the practice of painting, I cannot but feel it also my duty to caution every one who hears me against entering into it from improper motives, and with inadequate views of the subject; as they will thereby only run a risk of entailing misery and disgrace on themselves and their connexions during the rest of their lives. Should any student therefore happen to be present who has taken up the art on the supposition of finding it an easy and amusing employment—any one who has been sent into the Academy by his friends, on the idea that he may cheaply acquire an honourable and profitable profession—any one who has mistaken a petty kind of imitative, monkey-talent for genius—any one who hopes by it to get rid of what he thinks a more vulgar or disagreeable situation, to escape confinement at the counter or the desk—any one urged merely by vanity or interest, or, in short, impelled by any consideration but a real and unconquerable passion for excellence;—let him drop it at once, and avoid these walls and everything connected with them as he would the pestilence; for if he have not this unquenchable liking, in addition to all the requisites above enumerated, he may pine in indigence, or skulk through life as a hackney likeness-taker, a copier, a drawing-master, or pattern-drawer to young ladies, or he may turn picture-cleaner, and help Time to destroy excellencies which he cannot rival—but he must never hope to be, in the proper sense of the word, a painter.

Strait is the gate and narrow is the way that leads to excellence, and few there be that find it. True as this undoubtedly is in all cases, in no instance will it be found so applicable as the present; for in no profession will the student have so many difficulties to encounter—in no profession so many sacrifices to make—in no profession will he have to labour so hard, and study so intensely—and in no profession is the reward of his talents so precarious

and uncertain,—as is lamentably proved by every day's experience, and by every page of history.

Let me not be told that by such assertions I am raising obstacles and throwing obstructions in the paths of men of genius; for to *such* obstacles act as a stimulus; what quenches others gives them fire; and I am confident a knowledge of the truth will in the end equally benefit the art and the artist. Should any one be discouraged by it, I will say to him, I have rendered you an essential service; you will soon find some other situation better suited to your talents. But to those who can, undismayed, look all the difficulties in the face; who have made up their minds to conquer; who are ready to sacrifice their time, their ease, their pleasure, their profit, and devote themselves, soul and body, to the art,—in short, who cannot be restrained from the pursuit of it; to those I will say, You alone are *worthy*, you alone are *likely* to succeed: You give the strongest proofs that can be obtained, of possessing all the necessary requisites, and there is every probability that you will do honour to your art, your country, and yourselves; for nothing is denied to persevering and well-directed industry.

I wish we could see—I wish we could ever hope to see—the time when all external obstacles to the progress of art were removed; but as to the internal difficulties, however they may fret us, I am afraid we must, and ought to, consider them as our very best friends. They put me in mind of an anecdote of two highwaymen, which, as it is short, I shall take the liberty of introducing:—"Two highwaymen (says a certain author) passing once by a gibbet, one of them, with an ill-boding sigh, exclaimed, 'What a fine profession ours would be, if there were no gibbets!' 'O, you blockhead,' says the other, 'how much you are mistaken!—Gibbets are the making of us; for if there had been no gibbets, every one would be a highwayman.'" Just so it is in art: difficulties serve to keep out unqualified and unworthy competitors; if there were no difficulties, every one would be a painter.

Of the several branches or divisions of the art, separately considered, design or drawing is undoubtedly the most important; for on drawing, not only form, but action, expression, character, beauty, grace, and greatness, chiefly depend. Colour represents nothing, and lights and shadows have no meaning, till they are circumscribed by form. Drawing is therefore evidently the foundation and first element of the art, without which all the others, ideal or practical, are not merely useless, but non-entities.

Hence it is clear that drawing must have existed before any other branch of painting, and that drawing must still have precedence in the order of acquirement; and hence we can be at no loss to account for the enthusiasm with which it has been spoken of, nor for the zeal with which the study of it has been enforced by all teachers of the art. "He," says Sir Joshua Reynolds, "that is capable of delineating fine forms, even if he can do nothing more, is a great artist." And Annibale Carracci was wont to say to his scholars, "First make a good outline, and then (whatever you do in the middle,) it must be a good picture."

Many more expressions to the same effect, and of equal authority, might be quoted, but we have yet another proof infinitely superior to the opinion of any individual, however exalted, of the supreme necessity and comprehensive utility of drawing; for in all the various schools and academies that have been instituted, in every place and country in which painting has obtained a

local habitation, what has been invariably their object? Has it not been design alone? How little, if any, has been the attention bestowed on other branches of the art? If you ask them, 'What is the first requisite in a painter?' will they not say Drawing? 'What the second?' Drawing. 'What the third?' Drawing. They tell you indeed to acquire colouring, *chiar' oscuro*, and composition, *if you can*; but they *insist* on your becoming draughtsmen. After this, to doubt the importance of drawing, would be as absurd and arrogant as to doubt whether the institution of academies have in any degree contributed to the advancement of painting.

Were I to give an opinion on the prevailing practice of academies, I should say, not that too much attention has been bestowed on drawing, but that certainly too little has been paid to other branches of the art. A man who has obtained a considerable proficiency in one part, will not like to become a child in another; he will rather pretend to despise and neglect, than be thought incapable, or take the pains necessary, to conquer it; and therefore it is, that, though the student must necessarily commence with drawing, he should also very soon begin to attempt *chiar' oscuro*, colouring, and composition, and thus carry on the whole together, if he wishes to become a complete artist.

Good drawing, in the most confined acceptation of the term, demands at least two qualities, correctness and spirit; that is, the forms and quantities should be just, and rendered with precision and facility, which, simple as it may appear, not only requires an accurate eye and a skilful hand,—the result of incessant practice,—but *these* must also be accompanied by a clear understanding of the construction and mechanism of the subject attempted, for (as invariable experience proves,) he that is unacquainted with the shapes and structure of the bones and joints which support and govern the animal frame, and knows not how the muscles (the moving powers,) are arranged, fixed, and connected, and their modes of action, can make little or nothing of the continually varying appearance of them through their integuments, and the most successful endeavour at representing them would necessarily include as many blunders, as the translation of a book of science by a person who understood the language only, and was totally ignorant of the subject of it.

We cannot, as I have heard a great man express himself on another occasion, *see at sight*. A tolerably correct understanding of the construction and leading principles of an object, is requisite even to the seeing it properly; and the weight of the obligation on a painter to study anatomy will appear to increase in a tenfold ratio, when we likewise take into the consideration, how seldom it happens that nothing more is required of him than to represent his objects standing still, or lying in a motionless or languid position before him; for if, in such cases, the eye alone be insufficient to enable him to render them correctly, how much more so must it prove, in regard to figures enlivened by sentiment, or agitated by contending passions, and thrown into *sudden, animated, and momentary* action, in which a living model (if capable of being placed at all,) can hold but for an instant, and must quickly sink into quiescent torpidity! Here it is certain, that, if the artist possess not a thorough knowledge of the figure, if he understand not correctly the arrangement and play of all its different parts, their various and mutual dependencies on each other, and the appearances they must naturally assume in every given position,—if, at the same time, he be not equally familiar with the rules of pro-

portion, ponderation, and the just division and balance of motion, in every joint and limb, he will find it impossible to "catch the Cynthia of the minute;" his labour will be vain; his living model, far from proving an useful pattern, will rather tend to lead him astray, and his (under such circumstances) presumptuous attempt at drawing must inevitably be deficient in precision, correctness, energy and grace.

The uses of anatomical knowledge being so obvious, I shall only remark, in addition, that, as it has generally been too much neglected, so it has sometimes also been pursued too far. There are those who have suffered it to usurp the first place, and considered it as the end, instead of the means. Let the student be on his guard against this mistake; for, though by inflating the muscles, ploughing up the interstices between them in every direction, pushing the bones through the skin, or flaying his figures completely, he may possibly show himself an able anatomist, he will infallibly prove himself a bad painter. Let him remember that the bones and muscles are always covered by their integuments, and that they are more or less visible, square or round, soft or firm, divided or united into masses, according to the age, sex, occupation, situation, circumstances, and character of the subject, the expression of which with force, precision and fidelity, is always to be regarded as the principal end of drawing.

The study of anatomy, as I have before hinted, must necessarily be accompanied by that of proportion and symmetry; for what will the most intimate knowledge of the different parts of the human body, and their several functions, avail us, if we are, at the same time, ignorant of their relative lengths, sizes, and thickness in regard to each other and to the whole together, on which, and on the regulation of the precise degrees of meagreness, muscularity, softness, firmness, elasticity, rigidity, refinement or vulgarity, which must equally pervade every part of each figure, all unity, force and discrimination of character immediately depends.

General notions of proportion may undoubtedly be acquired with the greatest certainty and facility by a careful and persevering study of the antique; but they can be matured and completed only by referring to Nature, the fountain-head or mine, from whence all those surprising, and since that time incomprehensible, treasures of excellence must have been derived.

In nature, the elements and leading features of the animal economy are few; and the astonishing variety by which it is distinguished, appears to consist chiefly in the forms, quantities, and relative proportions of the parts. Every class of animals, and every individual of every class, is variously endowed with appropriate degrees of bulk, strength, and elasticity of body, and of energy, sagacity and comprehension of mind, according to its destination; and every combination of these, or other, qualities is inseparably connected with a particular set of proportions and configuration of parts, at once descriptive of the qualities united, and conducive to the end proposed by their union. Thus the combined qualities, and the combined proportions, are always reciprocally the exponents of each other. Hence, by viewing the form only of an animal, we are enabled to predict its qualities, whether it be strong or subtle, active or slothful, courageous or timid; and hence it also follows, that the true expression of character in painting depends on the proper conformation and adjustment of the parts to the whole and to each other, according to the unalterable and universally established laws of Nature.

Of these laws, or latent principles, of form, now so little understood, the ancients, by long study and laborious experiment, made themselves completely masters. They saw what particular proportions marked the physical powers; they understood what denoted the moral; they observed how the situation and shape of the head varied with the increase or decrease of intellectual vigour and comprehension, and, by skilfully applying their knowledge to practice, by judiciously exaggerating (in some cases) the peculiar distinctions of man, compared with the inferior classes of animals, by suiting the proportions to the qualities intended to be expressed, and by avoiding the mixture of anything incongruous or unnecessary, they produced those concentrated, dephlegmated and *highly rectified* personifications of strength, activity, beauty, majesty, wisdom, and enthusiasm which astonish and enchant us, under the names of the Hercules Farnese, the Venus, the fighting Gladiator, the Jupiter, and the Apollo.

The works of the ancients can never be studied too much, but they may easily be studied improperly: the prime object, which ought always to be kept in view, as the only means by which we can ever hope to rival them, is the re-discovery, in its fullest extent, of the principle on which they were formed, which none of the moderns have yet comprehended, nor probably attempted, scarcely suspecting its existence: the best of them have in general contented themselves with selecting some favourite figure, and using it on all occasions indiscriminately as a rule of proportion, absurdly forgetting that, if it was exactly proper in any one instance, it must necessarily be more or less improper in all others. Thus, in escaping the meanness and vulgarity of common nature, they confounded all distinction of character, and became incurable mannerists, insipid or extravagant, according to their choice of a model.

Nor is this the only evil to be dreaded and guarded against in the imitation of the antique statues: for though, as Rubens justly observes, we can never consider them too attentively, or study them too closely; though in order to attain perfection in painting, it is necessary to understand them, nay, to be so thoroughly possessed of this knowledge, that it may diffuse itself everywhere, (for in this degenerate age we can produce nothing like them,) yet it is no less certain that ignorant painters and beginners, who make no distinction betwixt the figure and the stone, the form and the material of which it is composed, often learn from them somewhat that is stiff, crude, *liney*, and harsh in respect to anatomy; by which, while they take themselves to be good proficients, they do but disgrace Nature instead of ennobling her, losing all her warmth and feeling, and giving us marble tinged with various colours in the place of flesh.—In sculpture, it must be remembered that, without any fault in the work or the workman, many outlines and shadows appear hard, dense, and opaque, which in nature are softened and harmonised by the colour and transparency of the flesh, skin, and cartilages, and that the lights also are extremely different from the natural, the hardness and polish of the material giving them a lustre and sharpness, which dazzles the eye, and raises the surface beyond the proper pitch.

The truth of these observations is too obvious to need a comment; but the whole force of them can hardly be felt by those who have not lately had an opportunity of viewing the works of the French school, in which, at present, the mischievous effects of an inordinate rage for copying the antique, are too

notorious for anything but the blindest prejudice to overlook or tolerate. It seems, indeed, to be the fate of this school to be ever in extremes. Formerly they were tawdry coxcombs; now they affect to be the plainest quakers in art:—formerly they absurdly endeavoured to invest sculpture in all the rich ornaments of painting; now they are for shearing painting of her own appropriate beams, and reducing her to the hard and dry monotony of sculpture:—formerly their figures were obscured by splendid colours, buried under huge masses of gorgeous drapery flying in all directions, and lost amid columns, arcades, and all kinds of pompous and misplaced magnificence; now they glue their draperies to the figure, paste the hair to the head in all the lumpish opacity of coloured plaster; nail their figures to a hard unbroken ground, and, avoiding everything like effect and picturesque composition, often place them in a tedious row from end to end of the picture, as nearly like an antique bas-relief as possible. In short, it seems to be the principal aim of a French artist to rival Medusa's head, and turn everything into stone; and so far it must be confessed, to their credit, that, however they may have failed to equal the beauties of the antique, they have certainly copied, nay even improved on, its defects with uncommon success.

When I say the defects of the antique, I mean in regard to painting only, for in sculpture I consider them as beauties. The ancients understood exactly what each art could, and what it could not perform, and wisely confined themselves, in the latter art, to the display of elegance and precision of form, just discrimination of character, and forcible expression of passion; but, in painting, I have no doubt that these were combined with many other excellencies:—for to suppose, as the French evidently do, that they followed precisely the same practice, that they did not attempt to give more lightness, fulness, richness and freedom to their hair and draperies; that they forbore to avail themselves of the powers of colour, and the artifices of contrast, to give depth, distance, and effect to their compositions, which however impracticable, and therefore absurd, in sculpture, are completely within the province, and form some of the most essential and appropriate beauties, of the sister art, —to suppose this, is to suppose them devoid of taste, and totally ignorant of the nature, extent, and powers of the art of painting.

"There is," says Dryden, "no short cut or royal road to the sciences." This remark will equally apply to drawing, which must be acquired by assiduous study and practice, and cannot be bought for money, nor taught by precept merely. I have pointed out some of the leading requisites and difficulties, and shown, in part, the way to eminence; but on your own energies you must at last rely for the attainment of it. I shall therefore finish my observations on this head, by repeating what cannot be too often repeated, too strongly impressed on your minds, nor too firmly fixed in your memory, that drawing is the only sure and stable foundation of the art, the only step by which you can ascend into the highest seats in the temple of Fame. By other excellencies you may, for a while, charm the senses, but drawing is almost the only weapon by which you can reach the understanding and touch the heart; it is the only instrument by which you can demonstrate elegance and beauty, develop character, and unlock the hidden recesses of passion. All other acquirements derive from it irresistible force and beauty; but unsupported and unassisted by correct, masterly, and scientific drawing, they can at best reach but a second-rate and temporary celebrity: when the tide of taste rises,

and the winds of criticism bluster and beat upon it, the showy but ill-founded edifice must quickly be swept away, or swallowed up and forgotten for ever.

These remarks are the more necessary, as it must be confessed that the strength of the English painters never lay so much as it ought in design; and now, perhaps more than ever, they seem devoted to the charms of colour and effect, and captivated by the mere penmanship of the art, the empty legerdemain of pencil.

But if the English artist runs counter, in this instance, to the established character of his country, and prefers the superficial to the solid attainments in art, has he not many excuses? may it not, in a great measure, be attributed to the general frivolity and meanness of the subjects he is called upon to treat? to the inordinate rage for portrait painting (a more respectable kind of caricature), by which he is condemned for ever to study and copy the wretched defects, and conform to the still more wretched prejudices, of every tasteless and ignorant individual, however in form, features and mind utterly hostile to all ideas of character, expression, and sentiment? And may it not, in part, be attributed to the necessity he is under, of painting always with reference to the Exhibition? In a crowd, he that talks loudest, not he that talks best, is surest of commanding attention; and in an Exhibition, he that does not attract the eye, does nothing. But however plausible these excuses, it becomes the true painter to consider, that they will avail nothing before the tribunal of the world and posterity. Keeping the true end of art in view, he must rise superior to the prejudices, disregard the applause, and contemn the censure, of corrupt and incompetent judges; far from aiming at being fashionable, it must be his object to reform, and not to flatter,—to teach, and not to please,—if he aspires, like Zeuxis, to paint for eternity.

IN taking a retrospective view of the progress of the art in modern times, it will be seen that the two first schools, both in rank and time, made design, and its dependent excellencies, their chief objects of study; which was no more than might have been expected, as design (I have already shown) must necessarily be attended to, in some degree, antecedently to any other branch of the art. But the artists of these schools had another, and a much more powerful, motive to urge them to the almost exclusive cultivation of this principal root and stem of painting: they had the exquisite remains of ancient sculpture to contemplate; these began from a very early period to attract general admiration: from these the first germs of correct taste were scattered among the people of Italy; by these their artists had their eyes first opened, and their minds first impregnated with ideas of true beauty; by these they first acquired elevated and just conceptions of nature, and were taught to look beyond the imitation of individual models for perfection of form, for graceful action, and for purity and grandeur of character.

But though both these schools made design a primary object, they differed essentially in regard to style, and in the manner of its application. Severity, energy and loftiness bordering on extravagance, characterize the principal works of the Florentines. Their style of design approaches the gigantic; it abounds with abrupt transitions and violent contrasts, and affects an expression of strength and fierceness, by which grace is but too often excluded and propriety violated. Taught by the ancients to soar above common nature, they

often mistook what was only uncommon and far-fetched, for the great and the extraordinary, and failed to interest, from too ardent a desire to surprise.

To their credit, however, it must be remembered, that modern painting owes them infinite obligation; they first burst the trammels of dryness, meagreness, hardness, and servile imitation; first introduced the free, bold, and flowing outline; gave the first examples of dignified character, energetic action, and concentrated expression; invented *chiar' oscuro* and grouping; and often imparted to their works a majesty unrivalled by any subsequent productions of art. On the whole, satisfied with commanding admiration, the Tuscan artists may be said to have considered the task of pleasing as beneath their notice.

The school of Florence, independent of its merits, has an indisputable title to the veneration of all lovers of the arts, as the first in Italy which cultivated them. Painting, which had languished and become nearly extinct with the Roman Empire, was revived by Giovanni Cimabue, born of a noble family at Florence, about the year 1240. His works, as may easily be imagined, were in a very ordinary, not to say wretched style; but if they had not excited the admiration, and received the applause, of his countrymen, Florence in all probability would never have been honoured with such a painter as Michael Angelo Buonaroti.

It would be as tedious as useless to recount the stammering and babbling of the art in its infant state. I shall therefore pass on to about 150 years after the death of Cimabue, when the dawning of an enlarged and liberal style of design began to appear at Florence; when Massaccio, whose works are still in existence, produced figures which Raphael, in the zenith of his reputation, did not disdain to transplant into some of his most celebrated compositions; when the intricacies and difficulties of fore-shortening began in some measure to be understood and subdued; when colouring and composition were attempted by Andrea Verocchio, Andrea Mantegna, and Luca Signorelli of Cortona; and when, in short, all circumstances seemed to concur to usher in, with becoming splendour, Leonardo da Vinci, one of the first luminaries of modern art, and one of the most extraordinary of men.

If it be true that "one science only will one genius fit," what shall we say to the man, who, master of all mental and all bodily perfections, equally excelled in painting, poetry, sculpture, architecture, chemistry, anatomy, mathematics, and philosophy; who renders credible all that has been related of the admirable Creighton, who attempted everything and succeeded in every attempt; who, sailing round the world of art and science, touched at every port and brought home something of value from each?

This was the glory of Leonardo, and this was also his weakness; for, equally in love with grandeur and littleness, beauty and deformity, character and caricature, he bestowed his attention on them all by turns, and soared or dived, as the caprice of the moment directed. His genius, however, gave the death-blow to flatness and insipidity, by the invention of that deep tone of colour, strength of shadow, and bold relief, which afterwards carried to perfection, enchants us in the dreams of Correggio, and electrifies us in the mysterious visions of Rembrandt.

Less profoundly learned in design, less lofty and comprehensive in conception than his great rival and contemporary M. Angelo, his celebrated cartoon of the horsemen contending for a standard is, nevertheless, one of the nobles

inventions in the whole circle of modern art ; it evinces a singular boldness and fertility of imagination, by the display of every attitude of the human body on horseback, in the various actions of striking, pulling, thrusting, warding, and evading a blow, combined with a felicity and energy, at once picturesque, interesting and surprising: the whole is animated, every part is in motion, and we witness, by turns, the collected coolness of true courage, the devouring malevolence of rage, the contending emotions of hope and fear, the exultation of assured victory, and the despairing gasp of inevitable death. The horses, conceived with the fire of a true poet, and executed with the science of an anatomist, rear and plunge into the battle with a fury equal to that of their riders: in short, this composition was altogether unexampled at the time, and unrivalled for ages after, till it suggested to Rubens the first hint for those magnificent groups of horses and figures, in his battles of the Amazons, and of Constantine and Maxentius; and for those astonishing masses of men and animals in commotion, his huntings of the lion, the tiger, the crocodile and the hippopotamus.

There is no possibility of calculating what such a man as Leonardo da Vinci may have lost by his versatility and want of perseverance. With such comprehension, and such invention, he might, doubtless, instead of furnishing hints, and pointing out the promised land to others, have taken possession of it himself, and carried the principles of *chiar' oscuro* and grouping to perfection. As it is, his works are comparatively of little value, the greater part of them (the celebrated *Last Supper* at Milan included,) having been left in an imperfect state.

Of numerous volumes, written by him on arts and science, *one only, a treatise on painting*, is at present in circulation; and by this alone, were there *no other* proofs, might the extraordinary extent of his capacity, and the eagerness of his research, be justly estimated; for though confused and unconnected, in some parts obscure and in others trifling, it is nevertheless one of the best elementary works on the art extant.

Whatever escaped the sagacity, or lay beyond the powers, of L. da Vinci, was accomplished by his mighty competitor M. Angelo Buonarroti, the glory of the Florentine school; who elevated design to a pitch of excellence, from which it has ever since been declining. The genius of this great man operated an entire change of principle in modern art: to the little and meagre, he gave grandeur and amplitude; to the confused and uninteresting he gave simplicity and effect; and on the feeble and unmeaning he stamped energy and character. Raffaele, his greatest contemporary and rival, thanked God for having been born in an age which boasted of such a man; and Reynolds, the greatest painter and critic of our times, prides himself on the capability of feeling his excellence, and declares, that the slightest of his perfections ought to confer glory and distinction enough to satisfy an ambitious man.

Michael Angelo, as we are informed by Ascanio Condivi, having observed the great deficiency of Albert Durer's rules for drawing, resolved to write a complete treatise on the anatomy and proportions of the human figure, and to compose a theory founded on the knowledge and experience acquired by his long practice, for the benefit of all *future artists*.

That this resolution was never carried into effect, must ever be regretted, as an incalculable and irreparable loss to the arts; for certainly never man before or since (at least in modern times) was so perfectly qualified for the task. Anatomy, it is true, has, in a medical and physiological point of view,

been subsequently much advanced, but the writers on the subject have, in general, been little able or solicitous to speak of the human figure in regard to proportion, beauty, character, action, and attitude, branches of the science the most interesting to an artist, the most difficult to investigate, and which, we may naturally conclude, would have occupied the larger share of a work composed by a professed painter.

Destitute of the assistance of this intended treatise, the knowledge of his principles can now be gleaned only by the accurate observation and diligent comparison of his works with those of others; for, in this particular, the accounts of his life, though copious enough in some respects, can help us but little. One circumstance, however, we learn from them, which I would wish to press forcibly on the attention of *all* my hearers, that he was indefatigable in his practice, and in the study both of nature and the works of the ancients, and that this was continued through his whole life, even to extreme old age: the poorest of men, as he observed of himself, did not labour from necessity more than he did from choice: indeed, from all that is related of him, he appears not to have had the smallest conception that his art was to be acquired by any other means than incessant and unwearied diligence, though, as Sir Joshua Reynolds justly remarks, he, of all men that ever lived, might have advanced the strongest pretensions to the efficacy of genius and inspiration. Let no one therefore overlook this salutary lesson, let no one henceforward presume to grudge his pains, or think the art of cheap and easy acquirement! I cannot quite agree with our revered and excellent painter, that nothing but labour is necessary to attain perfection; but of this I am quite certain, that, without labour, all other requisites will be vain and fruitless.

The principal work of Michael Angelo, in our art, consists of a series of pictures painted on the ceiling and part of the walls of the Pope's chapel, commonly called the Capella Sistina. The subjects, (taken from the sacred records,) beginning with the Creation, and ending with the Last Judgement, seem to have been chosen for the purpose of exhibiting the history of man, as he stands in relation to the Creator, and of showing his origin, progress, and the final dispensations of Providence respecting him. Of the magnificence of this plan, as you have lately heard it explained with unparalleled ingenuity and inimitable eloquence, in a way, in short, that sets the commentator on a level with his author*, I shall say nothing, but shall confine my observations to the peculiar style, which distinguishes the works in general, and *this* in particular, of Michael Angelo.

In the first place it is obvious, that he avoids, on all occasions, a multiplicity of objects, and a multiplicity of parts. He knew, as a great critic has judiciously remarked, that, in poetry and painting, many little things do not make a great one; and he has, therefore, rejected all unnecessary subdivisions, and unessential particularities: hence the bold swell and flow of his line, uninterrupted by useless breaks and petty inflections; hence the unencumbered breadth of his surfaces, on which the eye rests unfatigued and unperplexed by impertinent differences and trivial distinctions; and hence the fewness and largeness of the parts, both in respect to his figures and his compositions, at once so simple and so impressive.

* Mr. Opie here refers again to his immediate predecessor in the professorship of painting.—E.

[To be continued.]

The same method obtains with him in the intellectual as in the practical parts of the art. In his manner of conceiving his subject, and telling his story, he equally avoids all petty and common-place details of circumstances, ingenious artifices, unimportant shades of character, and merely curious varieties of expression, which arrest and distract the attention of the spectator, and weaken the force of the general effect: *essence*, not individuality—*sentiment*, not incident—*man*, not men, are his objects; and, like the Satan and Death of Milton, he meditates no second stroke, but hastens by one sure blow to effect his purpose.

As his profound knowledge of the human figure taught him what to reject, so it likewise taught and enabled him to mark the essential forms with unexampled force and precision: possessed himself, he instantly possesses the spectator, with the complete idea of his object. As in the drawing of his figures there is more knowledge and precision, so in their actions and attitudes there is more vigour and unity than is seen in those of any other modern painter. By this is meant, that the situation and turn of every limb is more correspondent with the whole, is more perfectly informed with the same mind, and more exactly bears its part in the general feeling; and hence it is, that, though Raffaele often exceeds him in the variety of his characters, the particular expressions of passion, and what may be called the dramatic effect of his pictures, yet, in giving the appearance of thought, capacity, and dignity, he is altogether unrivalled and unapproached.

This perfect unity or concurrence of every feature, joint, and limb, in the same feeling, united to the breadth and boldness of his style of drawing, is what constitutes the intellectual energy of his figures, and gives them that air of inspiration, and of belonging to a higher species of beings, which Sir J. Reynolds notices with such admiration. Rapt and absorbed themselves, they instantly communicate the same sensations to the beholder, who, awestruck, whilst he gazes on them, dares not think them on a level and of the same rank with himself.

Such is his figure of the Creator, borne aloft on clouds, dividing light from darkness; such when, descending on attendant spirits, he imparts the electric spark of vitality and immortality to the newly-formed Adam, or with a word calls forth the adoring Eve from the side of her sleeping mate; such are the majestic forms of the prophets Isaiah, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, Zechariah, and Joel; and such, though wild and haggard, the female form of the Cuman Sibyl, and many others, if not all, of that sublime and inimitable circle: all of them, more or less, in louder or lower tones, proclaim, "The imagination that conceived, and the hand that formed us, were divine."

These are some of the principal features of the style of Michael Angelo; a style in which knowledge, energy, and simplicity, bear equal parts; which unravels perplexity, gives the appearance of ease to difficulty, and imparts dignity and sentiment to every object it embraces. Though the sublime, in painting and poetry, so overpowers and takes such absolute possession of the whole mind, that whilst the work is before us, no room is left for the ungracious and ungrateful task of criticism, yet, in cooler moments, it cannot, it must not be denied, that Michael Angelo had derelictions and deficiencies too great to be overlooked, and too dangerous to be excused; that he was sometimes capricious and extravagant in his inventions, and generally too ostentatious of his anatomical knowledge; that he wanted the vigorous tone of colour, and force of *chiar-oscuro*, necessary to complete the effect of his

design; and that, from aiming always to be great, he often violated propriety, neglected the proper discrimination of character, and not seldom pushed it into monotony and bombast.

I know it has been pleaded in mitigation, that great painters like great poets,

"sometimes gloriously offend,
And rise to faults true critics dare not mend;"

that his errors flowed from the same source as his beauties, were often such as none but himself was ever capable of committing, and such as could never have occurred to a mean or vulgar mind. But I hold it not safe to admit of apologies of this nature, and more particularly in the present case; for errors are errors, from whatever source they spring, and are never so likely to be pernicious as when associated with splendid and overpowering excellence.

It being the nature even of the faults of M. Angelo to confer a kind, though a false kind, of dignity, too much caution and circumspection cannot be used in the study of his works. The ill success of his immediate and exclusive imitators proves that it is not safe for every man to attempt to draw the bow of Ulysses, or wield the club of Hercules. Let not the student hope, by distorting the limbs, exaggerating the action of the muscles, or by purloining here and there a figure from his compositions, to become an imitator, though he may become a *caricaturist*, of Michael Angelo: but let him first make himself master of his science and principles, let him carefully separate his errors from his excellence; and then, if he possess his boundless imagination, he will probably succeed better than Vasari, Bronzino, Hemskirk, Coxie, Goltzius, Spranger, and a herd of others, who mistook bombast for grandeur, distortion for grace, and phrensy for convulsion for energy. . . . Superficial and clumsy mannerists! the style of Michael Angelo, to them, was only the lion's skin on the ass's back, which, instead of rendering him terrible, only exposed him to blows, ridicule, and contempt. Such was not Raffaello Sanzio, the founder of the Roman school, the master of passion,—the painter of human nature.

The genius of Raffaello was not of that phosporic kind, that blazes out of itself without foreign help: his manner at the commencement of his career, was dry, minute, and hard to excess; precisely like that of his master Pietro Perugino, in whose footsteps he appeared for a time to be going on, without a conception of his own powers, or those of the art, and without imbibing a ray of inspiration from the miraculous remains of the ancients, by which he was surrounded, or transferring an atom of their grandeur of style into his own works. A visit to Florence, however, soon enabled him to leave his master at a humble distance. Seizing every opportunity of improvement, as he rolled on, he increased every moment in size and splendour; he mended his style of design, improved his colouring, and acquired composition. But it was not till after he had been clandestinely introduced to the sight of Michael Angelo's works in the Capella Sistina, that he completely freed himself from the defects of his first manner. Astonished by those gigantic forms, which seemed to look down with contempt on his littleness, and to say with a warning voice, "Go thou and do likewise," he instantly went home, as we are told by Vasari, and, obliterating entirely the work he was then employed on, he re-designed and re-painted the whole in a style of greatness unknown to any of his former productions.

Of these figures, a Prophet and Sibyls, which he endeavoured to conceive in the grand *gusto*, it is nevertheless remarkable, that, in wanting the science and precision, they also fail in a great degree of the sublime and energetic character of those in the Sistine Chapel. The correct judgment of Raffaello soon advised him of this defect; and, conscious of his worth as well as of his weakness, he no longer laboured to become another Michael Angelo, but studied him properly in conjunction with nature and the works of the ancients, taking as much of each as best corresponded with his own powers. Henceforward, therefore, his style of design became original and truly his own; not the vehicle of those awe-creating and terrific energies, conceived only by M. Angelo, nor of the more exquisite beauty and elevated refinement of the antique, but the medium of natural forms, well chosen, indeed, and united to an invention, expression, grace, and propriety, such as, in an equal degree, never before or since fell to the lot of one man.

But, however great and various his powers, his peculiar strength, that in which he has never yet been rivalled, and never can be surpassed, was **EXPRESSION**. To this all his efforts tended; for this he invented, drew, and composed, and exhausted nature in the choice of subjects to display it: every effect of mind on matter, every affection of the human soul, as exhibited in the countenance, from the gentlest emotion to the utmost fury and whirlwind of contending passions, from the demoniac phrensy of the possessed boy in the Transfiguration, to the melting rapture of the Virgin Mother contemplating her divine offspring, may be found so faithfully and energetically represented on his canvass, that we not only see, but feel, and are by irresistible sympathy made partakers of his well-imaged joys and sorrows: by this he attracts every eye, warms every heart, and sways it to the mood of what he likes or loathes: this is what has made him, if not the greatest, certainly the most interesting and the most universally admired of all modern painters, and rendered his name, in the general mouth, synonymous with perfection.

The history of no man's life affords a more encouraging and instructive example than that of Raffaello. The path by which he ascended to eminence, is open, and the steps visible to all. He began with apparently no very uncommon fund of ability, but, sensible of his deficiencies, he lost no opportunity of repairing them. He studied all the artists of his own and the preceding times, he penetrated all their mysteries, mastered all their principles, and grafted all their separate excellencies on his own stock; his genius, like fire, embraced and gathered strength from every object with which it came in contact, and at last burst forth in a flame, to warm, enlighten, and astonish mankind.

Both Michael Angelo and Raffaello, great as they were, in design fell extremely short of the ancients; M. Angelo, in variety, delicacy, and discrimination; and Raffaello in elevation, refinement, and precision. The first undoubtedly stands highest, but the last is probably the more eligible and safe model for *imitation*. Grace and propriety attend him in every step of his progress; his excellencies are both more numerous and more within the scope of general comprehension. He saw in nature what everybody sees but nobody ever before so well expressed; and no one, till he is convinced by experience to the contrary, doubts that he should have done precisely like Raffaello. On the contrary, Michael Angelo saw nature through a medium of his own, which took away its littleness, gave it energy and ampli-

tude, and rendered it more mysterious and imposing. The mere imitator of Raffaele, therefore, is likely to escape censure, though he may possibly deserve little praise; whilst the imitator of Michael Angelo risks everything at once; he must succeed or fail altogether,—he must be great or contemptible.

LECTURE II.—*Read at the Royal Academy, February 23, 1807.*

OF all the parts of painting, practical or intellectual, the first in importance by the universal acknowledgement of all ages and nations, the quality of all others the most rare, the most beneficial, and that which bears the most unequivocal marks of its divine origin, is undoubtedly Invention. Its possessors are therefore justly considered as aspiring to the highest honours of genius, and entitled to be regarded as the Newtons, the Columbuses, and the Alexanders of painting, who have discovered new principles, increased the possessions, and extended the dominions, of art.

Unfortunately this most inestimable quality, in which genius is thought more particularly to consist, is, of all human faculties, the least subject to reason or rule, being derived from heaven alone according to some, attributed by others to organization, by a third class to industry, by a fourth to circumstances, by a fifth to the influence of the stars, and in the general opinion the gift of nature only. But though few teach us how to improve it, and still fewer how to obtain it, all agree that nothing can be done without it. Destitute of invention, a poet is but a plagiarist, and a painter but a copier of others.

But however true it may be that invention cannot be reduced to rule and taught by regular process, it must necessarily, like every other effect, have an adequate cause. It cannot be by chance that excellence is produced with certainty and constancy, and, however remote and obscure its origin, thus much is certain, that observation must precede invention, and a mass of materials must be collected before we can combine them. He therefore, who wishes to be a painter or a poet, must, like Imlac, enlarge his sphere of attention, keep his fancy ever on the wing, and overlook no kind of knowledge. He must range deserts and mountains for images, picture upon his mind every tree of the forest and flower of the valley, observe the crags of the rock, and the pinnacles of the palace, follow the windings of the rivulet, and watch the changes of the clouds; in short, all nature, savage or civilized, animate or inanimate, the plants of the garden, the animals of the wood, the minerals of the earth, and the meteors of the sky, must undergo his examination. To a painter or poet nothing can be useless: whatever is great, whatever is beautiful, whatever is interesting, and whatever is dreadful, must be familiar to his imagination, and concur to store his mind with an inexhaustible variety of ideas, ready for association on every possible occasion, to embellish sentiment, and give effect to truth. It is, moreover, absolutely requisite, that man, the epitome of all,—his principal subject and his judge, should become a particular object of his investigation: he must be acquainted with all that is characteristic and beautiful, both in regard to his mental and bodily endowments, must study their analogies, and learn how far moral and physical excellence are connected and dependent one on the other. He must, further, observe the power of the passions in all their combinations, and trace their changes, as modified by constitution, or by the acci-

dental influences of climate or custom, from the sprightliness of infancy to the despondence of decrepitude: he must be familiar with all the modes of life, and, above all, endeavour to discriminate the essential from the accidental, to divest himself of the prejudices of his own age and country, and, disregarding temporary fashions and local taste, learn to see nature and beauty in the abstract, and rise to general and transcendental truth, which will always be the same.

Nor is his labour yet at an end. To the *study* of nature he must also join that of art, and enrich his mind by the contemplation of all the treasures produced by it in ancient and modern times, tracing its progress from its rudest infancy to its ultimate perfection; not contenting himself with a superficial survey, but studying attentively the peculiar manner of each master, dwelling on all their successful efforts, scrutinizing all their defects, observing all their beautiful thoughts; inquiring whence they were derived, with what connected, and how far founded in nature; entering into all the artifices of their compositions, and comparing their different modes of execution and arrangement, till he penetrates and develops the principles on which their most splendid effects are produced.

Thus impregnated and warmed by the contemplation of high excellence, our bosoms expand, we learn to see with other eyes than our own, and our minds, accustomed to the conceptions of the noblest and brightest intellects, are prepared, by degrees, to follow them in their loftiest flights, and rival them in their most vigorous exertions.

Here it will perhaps be remarked, that the greatest pains are often fruitless, and that we are not seldom called upon to admire the productions of native powers, unaided, unforced, unblest or unperverted by any kind of culture or foreign assistance whatever: whence it is inferred by many, that genius is no more than a sort of instinct, by which its happy possessors are led, without effort and without anxiety, to produce admirable works, though, at the same time, completely ignorant of the principles and causes on which such effects necessarily depend; an inference, than which, in my opinion, nothing can be more erroneous and unfounded; being convinced that it would be impossible to find one instance, wherein any high degree of excellence had been attained without great activity and exertion, and consequently considerable acquirements. The possessors of these supposed native talents had, it is true, been often denied the usual road to eminence; the gates of learning were perhaps shut to them; but we are not hastily to conclude from thence that they must have stood still: they defrauded the turnpike, and conducted their silent march another way, pursuing their journey not the less rapidly, though unaccompanied by the noise of flogging and whipping incident to travellers by the public stage. In short, whether observed or not, their time and talents must have been employed and exercised; and they profited of opportunities presented by chance, or procured by stealth, or there is no truth in the truest of all proverbs—"Out of nothing, nothing can come."

I do not, however, by what has been said, mean to assert, that the natural abilities of all men are on a par. I have allowed that equal degrees of industry and exertion will not in all cases produce equal effects; I only contend, that whatever differences may exist as to original capacity, still nature must be observed, art studied, and the mind well impregnated, before any fruits of high flavour and excellence can be derived from it. Homer, Shak-

speare, Milton, Michael Angelo, and Raffaele, may have been cast in a finer mould, "informed with purer fire," and adapted to receive, combine, and reflect images with greater facility, vivacity, and correctness, than other men; but, I cannot suppose, on different principles;—and if their works were not the result of knowledge, labour, and experience, they produced them without materials, and are consequently less inventors than creators. On such an hypothesis, it would be the height of absurdity to speak of the progress or cultivation of the art; the coming of a poet or painter would be altogether accidental or providential, and the greatest artist might as probably have been Adam, or the first man that ever saw a pencil, as Apelles, or Raffaele, though born under the most favourable circumstances, when the art was in its zenith. Nor ought we to have been more surprised, had Captain Cook found a Rubens carrying painting to perfection in Otaheite, than our ancestors were at seeing one doing the same in Flanders.

Next to the study of nature and the fine examples produced by the art itself, reading of various kinds, chiefly of history, natural history, voyages, travels, works of imagination, and, above all, of poetry in all its branches, may be considered as affording the most copious fund of materials, and imparting the most powerful stimulus to invention.

Poetry, in particular, bearing the closest analogy to painting, both arts setting out from the same place, journeying to the same end, and requiring the same kind of original powers,—both professing to improve upon their common models, to imitate instead of copying, to avoid the accidental blemishes and imperfections of individual nature,—to bring the scenes, actions, and persons represented, before us, with all the attendant circumstances, necessary to elucidate and embellish them, purified and exalted to the highest pitch of energy and beauty, and such as, though possible and probable, may never have actually existed,—we cannot wonder that drinking deep of the Pierian spring should have been forcibly recommended by all writers on the subject, as having the most direct tendency to exercise, warm, invigorate, and enrich the imagination, and excite noble and daring conceptions.

Here however it will be proper to remark, that, though from the acknowledged similarity in the principles and effects of these two arts, the one has been called *mute poesy*, and the other *speaking picture*, such is still the very great diversity in their modes and means of exerting their powers, that the study of one can, at best, be considered as a *general* only, and, not at all, as a *technical* help to invention in the other: the roads they take, though parallel, lie as entirely apart, and unconnected, as the senses of hearing and seeing, the different gates by which they enter the mind. The one operates in time, the other in space; the medium of the one is sound, of the other colour; and the force of the one is successive and cumulative, of the other collected and instantaneous. Hence the poet, in his treatment of a story, is enabled to bespeak the reader's favour by a graceful introduction, describing his characters, relating what has already happened, and showing their present situation, and thus, preparing him for what is to come, to lead him on, step by step, with increasing delight, to the full climax of passion and interest; whilst the painter, on the contrary, deprived of all such auxiliary aid, is obligated to depend on the effect of a single moment. That indeed is the critical moment, in which all the most striking and beautiful circumstances that can be imagined are concentrated, big with suspense, interest, passion, terror, and action; in short, the moment of explosion, which illuminates and brings at

once into view the *past*, *present*, and *future*, and which, when well rendered, is often more than equivalent to all the successive energies of the poet.

This contrariety in their means, in some degree, separates and limits their fields of operation; and (though there are many subjects equally adapted to both arts,) calls, in general, for a different principle in the choice of them. The most striking beauties, as presented to one sense, being frequently wholly untranslatable into the language of another, it necessarily results, that many interesting passages in history and poetry are incapable of affording more than a bald and insipid *representation on canvass*. Of this description is the incident in the Iliad, where one of Priam's younger sons, fallen before the superior force of Achilles, solicits his life on account of his youth. "Wretch!" exclaims the furious hero, "dost thou complain of dying, when thou knowest that Achilles must shortly die!" Such also is the celebrated passage in Corneille's Horatii, where the father of one set of the combatants, on being informed that his son, left single against his three antagonists, had turned his back, appears much agitated and enraged; and when one of his attendants asks, "What should your son have done against such a disparity?" instantly retorts, "He should have died." Enthusiastic strokes of energy and sublimity like these, irresistibly command warm and universal admiration; but, unfortunately for the pencil, they defy utterance by any power but words. Of the same class, also, is what passed in the council preceding the Revolution, between James II. and the old Earl of Bedford, whose son, the illustrious Russell, had suffered death in the foregoing reign: "My lord," said the King, addressing himself to the earl, "you are an honest man, have great credit, and can do me signal service." "Sir," replied the earl, "I am a feeble old man, and very unable to afford you any considerable assistance;—but I had a son," added he, "who, if he had been living, could have served your majesty in a more effectual manner." James was so struck with this reflection, that he forbore to answer another word.⁵ This, which is a very striking piece of history, with the other passages just mentioned, and many more of a similar nature, have frequently been pointed out by people unacquainted with the proper limits of art, as subjects well calculated for the pencil; which is so far from being true, that they are all of them deficient in many of the principal requisites to make a good picture: they all allude to distant events and complicated circumstances, enter into feelings which have no decided outward and visible signs, and exhibit only ambiguous expression of countenance and unintelligible action, at which had a deaf man been present, he could have formed no idea of the remarkable peculiarity that distinguishes them from all other incidents, and to which they owe all their power of moving. In addition to this, they are also necessarily deficient in that variety and contrast of forms, ages, sexes, and draperies, which engage and entertain the sight, and sometimes, with skilful management, supply, in a degree, by picturesque effect, the want of real interest built upon striking situation, palpable sentiment, decided passion, beautiful forms, and energetic action, the proper basis of all subjects peculiarly adapted to painting.

Invention, as a general power, undoubtedly depends on the command of a large fund of ideas, and an intuitive readiness of associating and combining them in every possible mode. This produces those radiant recollections, by which the images of absent things are often almost involuntarily called up, with all the vivacity of real objects moving about us, and pursuing us as in a kind of waking dream. Thus the casual mention of the single word *battle*

will to some minds instantly furnish out an endless chain of associated circumstances; cannons roar, clouds of smoke arise, the combatants on each side present themselves, we see them rush together, fight, struggle, and die: we hear their screams and shouts, notice all their various movements and changes of colour, advert to all the surrounding objects, observe how they are affected, and share their hopes, fears, compassion, rage, astonishment, or despair. To an Englishman of warm feelings and a lively fancy, the word would perhaps suggest a different train of associated ideas, connected with another element: *his* imagination would present the picture of a sea-fight in all its accumulated horrors, of ships sunk or blown up, batteries silenced, and whole fleets of the enemy at one stroke taken or destroyed: it might transport him instantly to Copenhagen, or the banks of the Nile, and force him to dwell with an equal mixture of grief, fondness, and exultation on the unparalleled deeds and the untimely fate of the hero of Trafalgar.

As a technical power, invention consists, not in composing, in the first instance, the story to be represented, but in seizing at once on the peculiar and prominent feature of the subject, placing it in the noblest and most interesting point of view, taking in all that belongs to the time and place chosen, discriminating the characters, entering into their situations, circumstances and relations; and all this with a reference at the same time to the genius and powers of the art by which they are to be embodied. The painter, for instance, as soon as his mind is affected by the grand or the pathetic, instantly clothes his ideas in all that is touching and awful to the sight, and carries it out through the whole of his composition, which includes the invention and disposition of every part, the managing his back-ground, throwing his lights and shades, and ordering the attitudes, and action, and expression of every figure that enters into, and constitutes a part of, his work.

But though, in general, the poet and the painter borrow the skeletons of their stories from a foreign source, it is evident that neither of them holds his art as subservient to any other; their business is something more than to illustrate, explain, or fill the chasms of history or tradition: each therefore, as soon as he has fixed on a subject, considers the end proposed, examines all the materials presented by his author, and all that his own mind suggests on the occasion, and selects, rejects, retrenches, adds, transposes, and moulds them all anew, till he has made them fit for his purpose; each adopts a chain of circumstances for the most part inapplicable in the case of the other; each avails himself of their common privilege of "daring everything to accomplish his end;" not scrupling, on some occasions, to run counter, if necessary, even to matter of fact; for though most strictly bound to the observance of truth and probability, these are obviously very different from such as is required in history; his truth is the truth of effect, and his probability the perfect harmony and congruity of all the parts of his story, and their fitness to bring about the intended effect, that of striking the imagination, touching the passions, and developing in the most forcible manner the leading sentiment of the subject.

"It is allowed on all hands," says Sir J. Reynolds, "that facts, and events, however they may bind the historian, have no dominion over the poet or the painter. With us, history is made to bend and conform to the great idea of art. And why? Because these arts, in their highest province, are not addressed to the gross senses, but to the desires of the mind, to that spark of divinity which stirs within, impatient of being circumscribed and pent up by

the world which is about us. Just so much as our art has of this, just so much of dignity, I had almost said of divinity, it exhibits; and those of our artists who possessed this mark of distinction in the highest degree, acquired from thence the glorious appellation of divine." Lord Bacon also justly observes, that "the human mind is never satisfied with the distribution of things as they are ordinarily met with in common life; it pants after a higher order of excellence, and creates to itself a world of its own, possessing more grandeur, and exhibiting more exalted and more perfect instances of heroism, enthusiasm, patience, fortitude, and justice, than the present dispensation of things admits of." The opinions of these great men will probably meet with corresponding sentiments in every breast; for it cannot be doubted, that, to fill this craving void in the imagination, to supply the imperfections of natural objects, to embody the highest possible ideas of excellence, and, finally, to inspire mankind with zeal and affection for all that is truly great and lovely, or, as the poet expresses it,

"To raise the genius, and to mend the heart,"

is one of the first and most important, if not the only proper, object of painting and poetry.

The principle of deviating from real fact and individual forms in search of higher excellence, however strange it may appear to such as have paid little attention to the subject, is far from being new or singular; it has indeed been the general opinion of the enlightened part of mankind in all ages. "He," says Proclus, "who takes for his model such forms merely as nature produces, will never attain perfection; for the works of nature are full of dissonance and disproportion, and fall very short of the true standard of beauty. On this account Demetrius was blamed for being too natural, and Dionysius ironically called the *man-painter*. Lysippus, on the contrary, adhering to the precept of Aristotle given to painters and poets, boasted that he made men, not as they were, but as they ought to be; and Phidias astonished all those who beheld the forms he gave to his gods and heroes, not, according to Cicero, by copying any object ever presented to his sight, but by contemplating the more perfect idea of beauty in his mind, to the imitation of which all his skill and labour were directed." From this care to advance their art, even beyond nature itself in her individual productions, arises that admiration, that almost adoration, which is paid by all competent judges, to those divine remains of antiquity, that are come down to us. Hence Phidias, Lysippus, and other great sculptors, are still held in veneration, and Apelles, Zeuxis, Protogenes, and other excellent painters, though their works have perished, are, and will for ever be, admired. They all, in the glowing language of a celebrated Italian author, "drew after the light of fancy, the exemplars of mind, which alone gives animation, energy, and beauty to art, and causes the loves and the graces to descend and take up their habitation in the hardest marble, and to subsist in the emptiness of light and shadow."

Nor have the moderns, though unable as yet to attain equal perfection, been less convinced than the ancients, of the power of this superior principle in art. Leonardo da Vinci instructs the painter to form this idea to himself, and Raffaele writes thus to Count Castiglione, concerning his *Galatea*; "To paint a beauty it is necessary to see many beauties; but because there is so great a scarcity of lovely women, I am constrained to make use of one certain idea, which I have formed in my own fancy as a model." Thus also

Guido Reni, when sending to Rome his picture of St. Michael, painted for the church of the Capuchins, wrote at the same time to Monsignor Monsano, the Pope's steward, in the following manner: "I wish I had had the wings of an angel to have ascended into Paradise, and there to have beheld the forms of beatified spirits, from which I might have copied my archangel; but not being able to mount so high, and it being vain for me to search for his resemblance here below, I was forced to make an introspection into my own mind, and to have recourse to that idea of beauty, which I had formed in my imagination, for a prototype, where I have likewise created the contrary idea of deformity and ugliness; but I leave the consideration of that till I paint the devil, and in the mean time shun the very thought of it as much as possible." On this letter it may be remarked that, though Guido felt the necessity of seeking aid from the ideal principle, it is clear he did not understand its full extent and import in art; for the ideal, if it mean anything, means the selection and assemblage of all that is most powerful and best calculated to produce the wished-for effect, and relates to the management of a whole composition, and to the just delineation of a bad moral character as much as to that of the most beautiful and amiable. Thus Iago, Macbeth, and Shylock, are as beautifully drawn, and as perfect in a dramatic point of view,—perhaps even more so, than Othello, Hamlet, Imogen, or Ophelia. The combination of mere deformity and ugliness can only represent disgusting and contemptible imbecillity, calculated perhaps to frighten children in a nursery, but nothing more: such a picture, to borrow an expression from a noted satirist, might be a damned thing, *but certainly not the devil*. He, "whose face deep scars of thunder had entrenched, who stood like a tower, whose form had not yet lost all its original brightness, nor appeared less than archangel ruined, and th' excess of glory obscured," must be derived from the same elevated source of invention, and composed, though of different materials, on the same pure and refined technical principle, as his more virtuous and happy antagonist: in the one must be embodied all that denotes the powerful, the terrible, and the malignant; as, in the other, all that appears majestic, amiable, and beneficent; and nothing, surely, can prove the force of Milton's genius, and the purity of his taste, more decisively than this circumstance, that, while all other poets contented themselves with exhibiting the prince of evil as a wretched, deformed, diminutive, pitiful hobgoblin, he alone, possessed by the true spirit of the ancient painters and sculptors, drew a character of him which, for sublimity of conception, felicity of execution and powerful effect, equals or surpasses anything of the kind that the art of poetry has yet produced, and which, in its way, may justly be considered as the *ne plus ultra* of human invention.

But, however allowable, and even necessary, the use of poetical licence may be to a painter, he is not therefore to imagine himself warranted in the indulgence of every kind of liberty that caprice or ignorance may suggest. Experience will soon teach him, that though he is not confined to mere fact and the exact shape of his model, nor brought upon oath to declare "the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth;" he is yet only freed from the letter, to bind him more closely to the spirit of his subject, and if he does not show precisely how it happened, he has the harder task assigned him of showing how it *might* and *should* have happened, to make the greatest possible impression on the spectator. His imperfections will not be excused, like those of the naturalist and historian, by laying the blame on the original;

the unities of time, place, and action must be strictly observed, and, above all, a perfect harmony and consistency of parts and style can never be dispensed with; for, however they may be mixed in *nature*, in *art* the grave will not suit with the gay, nor the ludicrous with the terrible; the heroic and the sacred must never be associated with the mean and the trivial, nor will the authority and masterly execution of a Paul Veronese reconcile us to the ostentatious display of such puerile incidents as a cat clawing the meat, or a dog gnawing a bone; in the foreground of a picture of the Last Supper. Hogarth told his story as perfectly, and with as much ingenuity, as Raffaele; but their styles would bear no mixture, as the meanness of character, and the strokes of wit, humour, and satire, with which the former abounds, and which make so large a part of his merits, would by no means become the classical dignity and energetic gravity of the latter. Such therefore as is his subject, such must be the artist's manner of treating it, and such his choice of accompaniments. His background and every object in his composition, animate or inanimate, must all belong to one another, and point to the same end; and under these restrictions he tramples with impunity on all vulgar bounds, and scruples not, on great occasions, to press the elements into his service, or even to call in the aid of imaginary beings and supernatural agency, to heighten the terrors of his scene, and more perfectly effect his purpose.

Thus Raffaele, in his picture called the *Incendio del Borgo*, has imagined a tempest, (as appears by the driving volumes of smoke and flame, and by the flying of the hair and draperies of his figures,) to give effect and add to the horrors of the conflagration; and, in another place, holds out the vision of St. Peter and St. Paul, with drawn swords and threatening looks, to wither the strength of Attila, and terrify him from his purpose of entering Rome. Swayed also by similar motives, Shakspeare makes his witches assemble in a subterraneous cavern, or on a blasted heath, "in thunder, lightning, and in rain," and the more surely to excite our pity, and heighten our abhorrence of the cruelty and ingratitude of Lear's daughters, exhibits the old king mad, wandering by night, and exposed bare-headed to all "the pelting of the pitiless storm." In like manner, Milton, to impress on us more forcibly the terrible consequences of the transgression of our first parents, makes the heavens weep, and the earth groan at the completion of that mortal sin, which "brought death into the world, and all our woe:" and thus Homer, to increase the importance of his heroes, and give dignity and interest to his subject, calls all the elements to his assistance, brings down the celestial, raises the infernal, deities, joins heaven, earth, and hell together, and suspends the fate of mortals and immortals, men and gods, equally on the issue of the combat.

To come nearer to our own times, I know of no one who has availed himself of poetic licence with more address than Sir Joshua Reynolds, in his celebrated picture of the death of Cardinal Beaufort, painted for the Shakspeare Gallery. The varied beauties of this work might well employ a great part of a lecture, but, at present, I shall pass them over, and attend only to what relates immediately to the question before us, the effect of the visionary devil, couched close, and listening eagerly behind the pillow of the dying wretch; which not only invigorates and clothes the subject in its appropriate interest and terror, but immediately clears up all ambiguity, by informing us that those are not bodily sufferings, which we behold so forcibly delineated,

that they are not merely the pangs of death, which make him grin, but that his agony proceeds from those daggers of the mind, the overwhelming horrors of a guilty and an awakened conscience. This was the point on which rested the whole moral effect of the piece; it was absolutely necessary to be understood, and could by no other means have been so strongly and perspicuously expressed. An expedient, therefore, at once so necessary, so consistent with the spirit of the subject, and so completely successful, far from being regarded as an unwarrantable licence, is justifiable by all rules of sound criticism, and ought to be regarded as one of the most signal examples of the invention of the artist.

It is to be lamented that this most poetical incident, producing equal effect, and proceeding from the same power of fancy, as that which caused the weird sisters to rise like bubbles and vanish with their enchanted cauldrons, which forged the air-drawn dagger to marshal Macbeth the way to Duncan, which dictated the resurrection of Banquo's ghost to fill the chair of the murderer, has not as yet been properly felt and appreciated according to its merits. So habituated are the people of this country to the sight of portraiture only, that they can scarcely as yet consider painting in any other light; they will hardly admire a landscape that is not a view of a particular place, nor a history unless composed of likenesses of the persons represented; and are apt to be staggered, confounded, and wholly unprepared to follow such vigorous flights of imagination, as would—as *will* be felt and applauded with enthusiasm, in a more advanced and liberal stage of criticism. In our exhibitions (which often display extraordinary powers wasted on worthless subjects,) one's ear is pained, one's very soul is sick with hearing crowd after crowd, sweeping round and, instead of discussing the merits of the different works on view (as to conception, composition and execution), all reiterating the same dull and tasteless question, *Who is that?* and *Is it like?*—Such being the case, it is no wonder that this work of our great painter has been condemned without mercy, by a set of cold-hearted, fac-simile connoisseurs, who are alike ignorant of the true end and the extensive powers of the art; who forget that Pegasus has wings to carry him unobstructed over mountains and seas, or who wish to have him trimmed, adorned with winkers, and reduced to canter prettily and properly on a turnpike road. Of the same class were those who of late endeavoured to rob the play of Macbeth of the powerful and affecting incident of the Ghost above alluded to. Happily, however, for the true lovers of Shakspeare, the genuine feelings of the public have decided against this most barbarous mutilation, and happily for the real judges and lovers of painting, the illustrious artist in question, though warned, before the picture was finished, of the outcry that would be raised against his introduction of the busy, meddling fiend, did not give way to his squeamish advisers; but, confiding in his more refined taste, riper judgment, and nicer feelings, boldly committed his claims to POSTERITY, by whom the debt, due to him from the present age, will be discharged with interest, provided the art advances here in a manner equal to the expectations which are now universally raised. From the instances already mentioned, to which thousands more, and perhaps stronger, might be added, it may be inferred that all possible licence may be granted, and a work elevated to any degree of the extraordinary without incurring the censure of being extravagant, provided—but here the mighty labour lies, which may well deter any attempt much above the ordinary course of nature—provided that the trains of ideas are

perfectly connected, and the whole completely consistent with itself; that there is no break or opening between them, nothing of a discordant nature suffered to interpose, to check the progress of the imagination, expose the illusion, and recall a different set of principles to the mind: this is all that is meant by probability in the imitative arts, and with this proviso, and no other, the precept of Horace takes place in its fullest extent, and painters and poets may do anything.

Invention may be demonstrated in every part of the art: Michael Angelo shows it more particularly in the unrivalled breadth, simplicity, greatness, and energetic character of his forms, and style of design, as well as in the epic grandeur of his conception: Giorgione, and Titian, in being the first who gave the true appearance of visible objects by the force, depth, and richness of their colouring; Correggio, and Rembrandt, in *chiar-oscuro*; and Rubens in composition. All these may be considered as the discoverers of principles, and the givers of features and limbs to the art itself; of whom all who come after are necessarily more or less the copiers; and I have, in consequence, treated of them under the several elementary heads to which they belong. But it yet remains to speak of invention in its more limited and specific sense, that is the complete comprehension of any given subject in all its parts, or the discovery and combinations of all the circumstances necessary to exhibit it with the utmost precision, truth, and force possible; which, though possessed, in a greater or less degree, by all those I have just mentioned, is the peculiar province of Raffaele alone, in which he reigns supreme, excelling in it not only all the moderns, but, for anything that appears to the contrary, all the ancients also. Raffaele, more than any other man, felt immediately the whole force of his subject, saw what it had, what it wanted, or was fertile in expedients to explain and embellish it, and to supply its deficiencies. No man's mind possessed so wide a range, gathered in so completely all the circumstances belonging to time, place, and action, or combined them with so much skill. No man drew characters so multiplied and so various, discriminated them so nicely, entered so deeply into their feelings, and gave them such clear and decided expressions. Under the most barren surface he discovered mines sparkling with the richest ores, and, touched by his pencil, the most unpromising subject bursts at once on the spectator, vivid, picturesque, and teeming with circumstances striking, amusing, and instructive. Playing on the utmost verge of possibility, he is never extravagant, and, keeping always within the bounds of probability, he is never insipid; he never sacrifices the primary to a secondary object, but hastens to the important point, and draws, colours, groups his figures, invents, alters, or suppresses incidents, always with a view to the full expression of the principal action of the piece; in short, his story is always told with a grace, probability, perspicuity, ingenuity, force, and pathos, altogether captivating and surprising, and which we may doubt of ever seeing equalled, but are certain of never seeing surpassed. On the whole, therefore, it must be granted to Raffaele, that, notwithstanding he seldom ascended the *brightest* heaven of invention, reached the conception of undescribed being, or rivalled the Greeks in the delineation of perfect beauty, enchanting grace, and character truly super-human, he has perhaps reached the utmost extent of the art in pathos and expression, and so far explored the natural regions, that it is scarcely possible to propose a subject or imagine a situation, within the sphere of humanity, which he has not treated, or in the treatment of which some con-

siderable assistance may not be derived from his works; and, take him for all in all, he undoubtedly forms the richest, most extensive, and most useful magazine of materials for study; with the least admixture of anything capable of misleading inexperience, of inspiring false taste, or of flattering the eye at the expense of the understanding.

It is happy for this country that it possesses many of the finest specimens of the powers of Raffaele. The cartoon of the St. Paul preaching at Athens, is, of itself, a school of art, in which the student may find most of the principles of historical invention, composition, and expression, displayed in characters of fire, not addressed to the eye or imagination only, but also to the understanding and the heart. This will be more sensibly felt, and the painter's merit more clearly understood, by comparing his work with another, on the same subject, by Jacobo Bassano, in which that artist has, as usual, contrived to leave out all that dignifies, all that interests, all that characterizes, and all that renders the story peculiarly proper for the pencil. As he knew St. Paul was but a man, he perhaps thought any man might be St. Paul, and taking the first unwashed artificer that came in his way, set him up as a model for the apostle, whom he consequently represents destitute of majesty, grace, action, or energy, and drawing out what no person attends to, or can believe worthy of attention. How different, on the same occasion, was the conduct of Raffaele! He took into consideration, not the real person of the saint, which is said not to have been of the most imposing class, but the intellectual vigour of his character, the importance of his mission, and the impression that ought to be made on the beholder; and, as a painter cannot make his hero speak like a great man, he knew it was his duty to render his mind visible, and make him look and act like one; and we, accordingly, find him on a raised platform, in a pre-eminent situation equally commanding his audience and the spectators, with parallel outstretched arms, and in an attitude at once simple, energetic, and sublime, thundering with divine enthusiasm against the superstitions and abominations of the heathen, and seeming, in the language of the prophet, to call on heaven and earth, to bear witness to the truth of his doctrine.

Instead of Athens, the university of the world, abounding with statues, adorned with all that is elegant and magnificent in architecture, and displaying, on every side, marks of unrivalled opulence and the most refined taste, Bassan presents us with three or four miserable huts, unworthy even of the name of a village, and, for an audience, we have a few half naked peasants of the lowest class, with their wives and children, suited however, it must be confessed, to the preacher, to whom they pay at least as much attention as he deserves; that is, they neither hear nor see him, but proceed quietly in gathering apples, pressing grapes, shearing sheep, or their other usual employments. This artist painted what he saw admirably well, but he saw with his eye only: destitute of imagination, and ignorant of the powers of his art, of the time, place, nature, extent, and importance of his subject, he could not, like Raffaele, transport us to Greece, and set us down in the midst of an assembly of philosophers; he could not penetrate their minds, discriminate their characters, nor, by their different expressions of curiosity, meditation, incredulity, contempt, and rankling malice, enable us, with no great assistance from fancy, to distinguish the Stoic, the Cynic, the Epicurean, the Jew Rabbi, and others appropriate to the occasion. We do not, as in the cartoon, see one touched, another confounded, a third inflamed,

and a fourth appalled by the irresistible force of that eloquence, which, in the full conviction of Dionysius and Damaris, manifests its ultimate success, ensures the downfall of polytheism, and the final triumph and establishment of Christianity.

Such are the powers of the pencil when under the direction of a comprehensive mind; but it behoves every artist to measure his wings before he takes his flight, to appreciate his powers before he chooses his subject: otherwise, the greater the attempt, with inadequate abilities, the greater and more ridiculous will be the failure; as may be seen by Bassan, who in painting brass pots, copper kettles, and even men and women of the lowest class, and in their ordinary employments, had scarcely an equal; and his pictures, where nothing higher is attempted, though not calculated to live in description, afford great pleasure to the sight by the freshness and harmony of the colouring, the spirit of the touch, and the illusive truth of the effect of the whole.

That Raffaele was qualified to do justice to a great subject, appears by the foregoing instance; that he equally knew how to enrich a barren one, will be seen by what follows; for where can be found a more decisive proof of invention—I had almost said creation—than in the cartoon of Christ's Charge to Peter?—a subject which, I will venture to say, offers very little, capable of tempting a common mind, and common powers, to undertake it. But, however slightly the incident is touched by the historian, and however meagre it may appear in the book, in Raffaele the whole is full, animated, connected, rounded, and *wound up to the highest pitch*, and, for conception, discrimination of character, composition, and expression, stands forward as one of his most distinguished works. In this picture, the apostles are all collected into one compact group, as would naturally happen when any important communication was expected; and the Saviour, both by his majestic simplicity of action, and his detached situation, is evidently the principal figure of the piece. Before him St. Peter kneels, with joyful reverence, to receive the sacred charge; St. John, the beloved disciple, who may be supposed to feel some mortification at this choice of a pastor, presses forward with enthusiasm, as if to show that, in zeal and affection, he yields to no one; and the rest, though all *attentive* and *dignified*, are varied both in attitude and expression, with an extraordinary and surprising felicity of *management*,—some seeming to feel complete satisfaction in the preference given to Peter,—some to doubt its propriety,—some appear inclined to whisper disapprobation,—while the gestures of others betray their subjection to the demon of *envy*.—All these varied and contrasted emotions, accompanied each by its appropriate action, and physiognomical character and temperament, which display so deep an insight into the human mind, are the pure offspring of the artist's imagination, and so happily supply the deficiencies of the historian, that, far from weakening or contradicting, they at once aggrandize, embellish, and render the truth more lively, probable, and affecting.

It would be endless to enumerate all the instances of invention, so profusely scattered over the works of Raffaele, many of which, also, it would be difficult or impossible to explain, without having the pictures or engravings from them, before us. I shall therefore content myself with adducing one more remarkable example of his powers in expression, and his ingenuity in telling his story.

In the cartoon of the Sacrifice at Lystra, the inhabitants of that city, it appears, are about to offer divine honours to Paul and Barnabas; and it was necessary that the cause of this extraordinary enthusiasm, the restoring the limb of a cripple, should be explained; which, to any powers less than those under consideration, would perhaps have been insurmountable, for this reason, that painting having only the choice of one single moment of time, if we take the instant before the performance of the miracle, how can we show that it ever took place? if we adopt the instant after, how shall it appear that the man had ever been a cripple? Raffaele has chosen the latter; and, by throwing his now useless crutches on the ground, giving him the uncertain and staggering attitude of a man accustomed to support, and still in some degree doubtful of his newly acquired power, and by the uncommon eagerness with which he makes him address his benefactors, points out both his gratitude and the occasion of it; and, still further to do away any remnant of ambiguity, he introduces a man of a respectable appearance, who, lifting up a corner of the patient's drapery, surveys with unfeigned astonishment the newly and perfectly formed limb; in which he is also joined by others of the bystanders. Such a chain of circumstances, as Webb justly observes, equal to a narration in clearness and infinitely superior in force, would have done honour to the inventor, in the happiest æra of painting in Greece.

But, though no man can more sensibly feel the force of Raffaele's extraordinary powers, I cannot agree with a celebrated author, in justifying him for making the boat in the cartoon of *The Miraculous Draught of Fishes*, so exceedingly too diminutive for the figures it carries. "Had this boat," says Richardson, "been proportioned to the figures, it would have filled the picture; and had the figures been reduced to a smaller scale, they would not have accorded with the rest of the set;" and hence he infers, that this apparent defect is the strongest proof of the judgement of the artist, in choosing the least of two evils, one of which was inevitable. But, unfortunately for this certainly ingenious defence, both the evils might have been easily avoided, two ways; first, by not bringing the whole of the boat into the picture; and secondly, which would have been the most masterly, by giving a fore-shortened view of it, in which case it would have appeared of the proper capacity, without occupying more space on the canvass than it does at present. This, and a few other trifling errors, such as his making a house on fire in the back-ground of one cartoon, and the introduction of a naked child in the fore-ground of another, may be mentioned, not as detracting anything from the superlative merits of Raffaele, against which, had they been ten times more numerous, they would be but as dust in the balance, but merely to show that no authority, however gigantic, ought to be made a cover to negligence, or a sanction to impropriety.

The study of excellent works of every class, and, more particularly, of such as I have been mentioning, is a certain way to improve, if not to create, an inventive faculty; and I have no doubt that a person comparatively poor in natural gifts, who steadily pursues his purpose, and makes use of all the means open to him, would soon eclipse the strongest in native ability, who neglects them, and trusts to himself alone;—which, after all, would be an attempt as ridiculous as arrogant—for, whether we wish it or no, nine hundred and ninety-nine out of a thousand of our thoughts, are necessarily suggested by the works of others.

LECTURE III.—*Read at the Royal Academy, March 2, 1807.*

IN reading the history of painting, the pride of an Englishman cannot fail to be mortified while he observes that the encouragement of the art has, till very lately, been solely confined to the Continent; that we hear nothing of British schools, establishments, painters, or patrons; that all writers on the subject seem to consider the hyperborean fogs of England as completely inimical and impervious to the rays of taste; and that, however justly we may boast our superiority in some points, the country has hitherto been forced to allow its deficiency in the most refined branch of civilization, and content itself with a very subordinate rank among those who have aspired to the patronage of the fine arts.

Considering the energy of the British character, and the distinguished importance of the nation in the scale of Europe, can we wonder that this extreme deficiency, in points so essential to national honour, should have given rise to many contemptuous remarks, and much vain speculation, respecting the causes of it? But whatever the causes may be (and, doubtless, they cannot be derived from any creditable source), the assertions of Winckelman, Abbé du Bos, and others, that the nation which has produced a Bacon, a Newton, a Milton, and a Shakspeare, is naturally incapable of succeeding in painting, are an insult to common sense, originating in conceit, malice, or a confirmed stupidity, only to be equalled by the folly of another set of good-natured continental philosophers, who, confining taste to certain parallels, discover the genius of nations by a map and a pair of compasses, and wisely determine that no country situated in a higher latitude than fifty degrees north, can succeed in the cultivation of the arts. Such puerilities deserve no answer. The causes that first obstructed, and perhaps still in some degree continue to retard, the progress of the arts in this island, are, by an ingenious writer, clearly proved to be the Reformation, and its immediate consequences. In throwing off the Roman yoke, with all its impositions and superstitions, the nation unfortunately mistook reverse of wrong for right, and, because the arts were respected and patronized at Rome, rashly concluded that therefore they were certainly of a diabolical origin, and ought to be held up as objects of peculiar aversion and abhorrence to all true believers. Hence painting, in England, denied all public support, every noble use of it prohibited, and every source of encouragement to its higher branches effectually dammed up, sunk into mere portraiture, the parasite of personal vanity, and was condemned for centuries to "flatter fools and chronicle small beer."

Happily this intolerable bigotry is now nearly extinct, and a lover of painting is no longer in danger of being considered as an idolater; but, though taste revives, and the arts begin to be received on a more respectable footing, it must still be confessed that little or no attempt has yet been made to rectify past errors, and do away this national opprobrium. Our halls and public buildings, instead of having their walls made the records of the virtues and heroic actions of our ancestors, and the oracles of philosophy, patriotism, and humanity, still remain barren and desolate; and our churches and temples, destitute of all appropriate ornament corresponding to the magnificence of the architecture, appear more like prisons, or the dreary haunts of perturbed spirits, than places of worship for a devout, elegant, and enlightened people.

That this *has been* the case, though it must be lamented, it cannot perhaps be wondered at; but that this should *still be the case*—notwithstanding the growth of taste and more liberal opinions, notwithstanding the foundation of the Royal Academy, and the spirited example of the First Individual in the country,—notwithstanding the generous offer of the English artists, some years ago, to decorate St. Paul's cathedral at their own expense, and notwithstanding they have proved the practicability of raising the British character, in regard to the arts, as high as it justly stands in all other respects, by their having become the first school at present in Europe, on the mere scraps, of-fals, and *dog's-meat* of patronage, afforded by hungry speculators, or falling by chance from the old masters' tables,—*this is to be wondered at*. And, taking also the opulence of the nation into the consideration, in addition to all other circumstances, I cannot but think the apathy of the public in regard to the arts is a something not easy to be accounted for. I hasten therefore to dismiss the subject, lest, on a further view, I should become an apostate to myself, and go over to the opinions of those shallow continental critics, whom I have just been attempting to hold up to ridicule and contempt.

One cause, however, of the discouragement of English art I will mention, which, though not to be charged with the whole, certainly contributes very considerably to the weight of the evil; that is, the vast and continued influx of old pictures into every part of the kingdom, more than nine tenths of which, to the eye of true taste, offer nothing but a battered mediocrity, or worse, bad originals, and bad copies of bad originals, smoked, varnished, and puffed into celebrity by interested dealers and ignorant connoisseurs, and sold for sums that would have astonished the artists under whose names they are fraudulently passed; to the utter starvation of all national attempts at excellence, which it is the business of these people to obstruct and decry, lest the public should, by degrees, become enlightened, and their property and markets be lost. I would not be illiberal: amongst these importers and dealers there are, no doubt, some who are well-intentioned, who think they are rendering their country a service, by the introduction of works capable of exciting the dormant genius of their countrymen, and serving them as models for study and improvement:—peace to all such! It is proper, however, to tell them, that this is mere Galvanic encouragement; it may excite a few convulsive twitches, but will never inspire the arts with life and efficient activity. They should also be informed, that it is practice, and not models, which the artists of this country stand in need of; and that he who employs the humblest artist in the humblest way of history, contributes more to the advancement of national genius, than he that imports a thousand *chefs d'œuvres*, the produce of a foreign land. Let us, then, hear no more of dealers as patrons of art! They are no true votaries: they are but buyers and sellers in the temple of Taste, and, when the deity himself comes, will be driven forth with ignominy and stripes.

Before I quit this ungrateful theme, candour requires me to state, that opinions differ even on this subject. It has lately, to my great surprise, been discovered, that in no age or country have the arts been so splendidly and liberally encouraged as in England; that all proper stimulus has here been applied to exertion; that no artist has wanted employment but through his own demerits; and that all complaints and remonstrances are neither more nor less than libels on the nation. Hear this! injured, but immortal, shades of Hogarth! Wilson! Barry! Proctor! and many others equalled with you

in fate!—of Hogarth, who was compelled to dispose of works of infinite, and till then unknown and unimagined excellence, by the disgraceful modes of raffle or auction; and who, in his ironical way, gave his opinion on the point in question, by dedicating one of his most beautiful prints to the King of Prussia, a patron of the arts;—of Wilson, who, though second to no name of any school or country in classical and heroic landscape, succeeded with difficulty, by pawning some of his works at the age of seventy, in procuring ten guineas, to carry him to die in unhonoured and unnoticed obscurity in Wales;—and of Barry, who, scorning to prostitute his talents to portraiture or paper-staining, was necessitated, after the most unparalleled exertions, and more than monastic privations, to accept of charitable contribution; and at last received his death-stroke at a sixpenny ordinary! It may, however, afford some consolation and some *hope*, to observe, that the public felt for Barry, that they acknowledged his abilities, subscribed readily to his necessities, and at least did

“ Help to bury whom they help'd to starve.”

Here I cannot but observe with pleasure, that, since the above remarks were written, an event of a highly satisfactory nature has taken place, which every lover of the arts and his country must hail with heart-felt satisfaction.

Richardson, in his excellent treatise on the Theory of Painting, declares he has no doubt that the time is fast approaching when many English names will be found worthy to stand high in the list of modern artists; and in another place he says, “ I am no prophet, nor the son of a prophet, but in considering the necessary concatenation of causes and effects, and in judging by some few visible links of the chain, I feel assured, that, if ever the true taste of the ancients revives in full vigour and purity, it will be in England.” However visionary this expectation might have appeared in the author's lifetime, the first part has already proved well-founded: the names of Reynolds, Gainsborough, Wilson, Hogarth, Barry, and many others, would undoubtedly do honour to any modern school. Their works have for ever decided the question respecting the capacity of the English for excelling in painting; and the enthusiasm with which their success has inspired their successors, joined to the circumstance to which I just now alluded, the establishment of the British Institution, gives us abundant reason to hope that the full accomplishment of Richardson's prophecy will not long be delayed. The efforts of a powerful and patriotic body, composed of the first in rank, taste, knowledge, influence, and liberality, if properly directed, cannot fail of success. On them, therefore, every eye is turned, with a grateful confidence, that measures will speedily be adopted to put the hitherto neglected arts on a firm and respectable basis, to disseminate their principles, and forward the cultivation of them, in that style and on that scale best suited to their dignity and importance, best calculated to confer honour on the country, and hasten that desired period, when on this, as on every other ground, we may see,

“ Britain, conscious of her claim,
Stand emulous of Greek and Roman fame.”

After drawing, which I have already treated of as the only proper and stable foundation of the art, the next most important requisite towards obtaining the true representation of natural appearances, is the application of light

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and shadow, or rather, what the Italians understand by the term *chiar-oscuro*, which includes not only light and shadow, as it affects each separate part, but the proper division and distribution of the whole surface of a picture into bright or dark masses, whether the darkness be produced by shadow, or by the proper colour of some of the objects represented. A black horse, or a black cloak, a brown, a deep red, or deep blue object, for instance, will be part of the obscure of a picture, even though it be painted as with the light falling on it. By light and shadow all objects, and parts of objects, are made to project or recede, to strike or retire, to court or to shun the attention of the spectator, agreeably to truth and propriety. What, as a mere drawing, was flat, tame, and monotonous, by the aid of this principle bursts forth at once into roundness and reality; entire figures are detached from their ground, seem surrounded by air, and spring forward to meet the eye with all the energy of life. Thus the painting of a Venus, by an ancient artist, was said to start from the canvass, as if she wished to be pursued. It gives depth, and marks the various distances of objects one behind another; and, if drawing be the giver of form, light and shadow must be allowed to be the creator of body and space.

In addition to this, if properly managed, it contributes infinitely to expression and sentiment; it lulls by breadth and gentle gradation, strikes by contrast, and rouses by abrupt transition. All that is grave, impressive, awful, mysterious, sublime, or dreadful, in nature, is nearly connected with it. All poetical scenery, real or imaginary, "of forests and enchantments drear," where more is meant than is expressed; all the effects of solemn twilight and visionary obscurity, that flings half an image on the aching sight; all the terrors of storm and the horrors of conflagration,—are indebted to it for representation on canvass. It is the medium of enchanting softness and repose in the works of some painters, and the vehicle by which others have risen to sublimity, in spite of the want of almost every other excellence. In allusion to these known and acknowledged effects, the magic of light and shade is become a proverb.

The power of expressing the simple effects of light on detached objects may easily be acquired by drawing and shading after nature; but the knowledge of *chiar-oscuro*, in its general acceptation, (consisting, as I have already observed, in the proper division of the whole surface of a picture into light or dark masses, with the connecting gradations of middle tint, local colour, and reflexes,) can only be learnt by joining to practice a scientific observation of the more enlarged phenomena of nature, and a thorough investigation of the works of those masters who have excelled in this important branch of the art.

By scientific observation, it is not to be understood that a painter must necessarily be profoundly versed in optics: a general knowledge of its leading principles will be sufficient. He must consider this science, like anatomy, as a *means*, not as an end; otherwise he may waste his time in acquiring what will be of little or no value to him, instead of applying all his strength in the proper direction. He must be unwearied in observing nature in reference to his art, in watching all her effects, and in considering how they may be applied to relieve, vary, and enliven the different parts of his compositions, not only in regard to pleasing the eye, but also in respect to the mind and feelings, as they tend to inspire gaiety, to infuse melancholy, or awaken terror.

By studying the works of the great masters of *chiar'-oscuro*, he will, by degrees, become acquainted with all the artifices of contrasting light to shade, and colour to colour, to produce *relievo*; of joining light objects together, and dark objects together in masses, in order to produce splendour and breadth of effect; of gradually sinking some objects wholly or partly in shadow, and losing their outlines in the ground, to produce softness and harmony; and of making, in other places, abrupt breaks and sharp transitions, to produce vivacity and spirit. He will also learn their rules for shaping their masses, and of adapting them, in regard to force or softness, to the nature of the subject, whether grave or gay, sublime, melancholy, or terrible. By this he must be directed when to give his light the form of a globe, or when to send it in a stream across his canvass; when to make a dark mass on a light ground, or a light mass on a dark ground; when he may let his light die away by imperceptible gradations; when to diffuse it in greater breadth and abundance; and when it may more properly be concentrated into one vivid flash.

These are some of the most approved methods of conducting the *chiar'-oscuro*, the ends of which, as may be inferred from what I have already said, are three:—first, by dividing the surface of the picture into light and dark masses, to please the eye, and prevent that confusion and perplexity incident to its being attracted by two great a number of parts of equal importance at once; secondly, to relieve or push into notice the principal objects, and to keep others in proper subjection, or sink them into obscurity, according to their several degrees of consequence or use in the composition; and lastly, by the manner of it, to aid expression, and give the first impression of the nature and predominant sentiment of the piece. But whether, in conformity to the prevailing passion, the shadows roll in midnight masses, enveloping the greater part of the picture, or are so faint as to be scarcely perceptible; whether they break with abrupt violence, or sweetly and gently steal upon the sight; whether they are warmed and enlivened by reflexes, or preserve a sullen and uniform breadth;—one quality they should never, under any circumstances, be without, and that is *transparency*, which, at the same time that it is indispensable, is unfortunately one of the greatest practical difficulties of the art. Of that which depends on delicacy of eye, dexterity of hand, and practical knowledge of the materials, little of course can be explained by words; but every one will easily perceive, by experiment, and by study of the works of others, that a dark colour, laid thin upon a light one, will generally appear clear and pleasant, but that a light colour, laid thin upon a dark one, is almost always opaque and disagreeable. Hence the most efficacious way of preserving the transparency of shadows is to paint them rather faint at first, and give them their full warmth and depth by a second operation.

The *chiar'-oscuro* of a picture does not, however, depend on lights and shadows merely. Hot and cold, bright and dark colours start from and avoid one another, with nearly as much vivacity as light from shadow; but a composition, painted entirely on this principle, will necessarily be feeble and flimsy, from the want of roundness and depth, which it is the property of shadow alone to bestow. Good pictures must partake of both principles; leaning to the opposition of colours in subjects of a gay, and to the opposition of light and shadow in subjects of a graver or grander cast*. But, whatever be your subject, let your principal mass of light maintain its pre-eminence in

* Rubens depends too much on opposition of colours.

size and splendour, like the centre of the system, from which all the others emanate, and by which they are all supported. Let the inferior ones be diversified in shape and quantity as much as possible; for equal quantities and similar shapes always produce hesitation and perplexity, unless the reason for it be immediately obvious; and, in addition to this, let your masses, if possible, lie somewhat in an oblique or diagonal direction with respect to each other, by which they will appear to fall more naturally into the stream of light, and consequently be more pleasing to the eye.

I would be far from recommending or countenancing a careless or inaccurate manner of handling; but, whilst I allow the necessity of your attention to the detail of your performances, I feel it my duty also to caution you not to neglect the general effect, and call upon you to remember, that, unless a breadth of light and shadow be preserved, invention loses half its force, drawing half its value, and the utmost finishing will be labour in vain.

Every man in every profession must frequently find himself compelled to listen to common-place opinions on the subject of it, copied from author to author, and bandied from critic to critic, without sufficient examination. Among others of this description, concerning painting, I have often heard it dogmatically asserted, that the light of a picture must necessarily be all derived from the same source; and, consequently, that two rays or streams should never cross each other, nor the shadows be seen to fall in opposite directions. This opinion I have no hesitation in pronouncing a vulgar error, wholly unfounded in nature, and therefore likely to be mischievous in art.

In nature, particularly in the interior of buildings and other confined situations, lights will be often observed flowing from different and opposite sources; and the works of the great masters must quickly convince all who study them, that, in art, provided the effects of them be truly represented, and the masses that compose the *chiar'-oscuro* of the picture be kept undisturbed and unbroken, the painter is at perfect liberty to introduce his lights in different directions; which, if well managed and properly accounted for, will be so far from creating confusion, that, on the contrary, they may impart to his composition a richness, splendour, and vivacity, unattainable by any other means.

I mention this to free the student from the weight of unnecessary shackles; but I would by no means recommend his attempting the use of light in two or more directions, till he has acquired a thorough knowledge of its effects in its most simple mode, and a competent skill in the management of his *chiar'-oscuro*.

It is not one of the least remarkable circumstances in the history of the art, that shadow, though the inseparable companion of light, the only criterion to the eye of roundness and projection, and, in its effects, no less pleasing than surprising, should have continued unknown and unnoticed for ages, by the Indians, the Persians, and the Egyptians anciently, and by the Chinese even to the present day. The fact however seems indisputable; and some have even gone so far as to assert, that the Greeks were, equally with their neighbours, ignorant of this fascinating branch of the art; but for this calumny there appears not the shadow of a foundation: the works of their poets, orators, and philosophers, abound with allusions to, and passages in

* The following passage, as far as to "management of his *chiar'-oscuro*," was found on a loose paper lying at this part of the discourse, and is therefore here inserted.—E.

the most lively manner describing, its effects. Longinus observes, that if we place, in parallel lines on the same plane, a bright and an obscure colour, the former springs forward and appears much nearer the eye: this is the first and simplest effect of the laws of *chiar-oscuro*. Philostratus also tells us that Zeuxis, Polygnotus, and Euphranor, were, above all things, attentive to shade happily their figures; and hence it was, no doubt, that the paintings of Parrhasius were termed realities, being possessed of such a force of *chiar-oscuro*, as no longer to appear the imitations of things, but the things themselves. Agreeable to this is the observation of an ancient writer, that, in painting, the contours of objects should be blended with, and sometimes lost in, the shade; for on this, joined to colouring, depend tenderness, roundness, and the similitude to truth. Nicias, the Athenian, is also praised by Pliny for his knowledge in this branch of the art. He preserved the lights and shades, and was particularly careful that his paintings should project from the canvass. But the greatest effect of this kind is, by the same author, attributed to the pencil of Apelles:—"In his portrait of Alexander in the character of Jupiter," says Pliny, "the fingers seem to shoot forward, and the thunder to be out of the picture." This passage is too striking to need a comment. What more could we say of the finest examples of modern art? What more could we expect from the pencil even of Rembrandt or of Reynolds!

These quotations, to which innumerable others of equal weight might be added, are sufficient to rescue the Greeks from any imputation of ignorance on this head, were we not, also, in possession of ancient paintings, which, though not of that kind in which we ought to expect examples of the first class, certainly contain merit enough to set the matter in question beyond dispute.

In the history of modern art, we find, as might be expected from what has just been stated, that design and colouring take the lead considerably. Two hundred years elapsed from the time of Cimabue, with whom the modern accounts commence, to the time of Leonardo da Vinci, during which the succession of painters is complete, and a regular gradation of improvement noticed; yet we find no mention of effects of light and shadow; and, if any attempts of that kind were made, we must conclude they were so faint and ineffectual as not to deserve observation, till the last-mentioned painter, whose character I have dwelt on in a former lecture, broke at once entirely through, and trampled under foot, the timid, flat, dry, and meagre manner of his predecessors, and taught his contemporaries and posterity to give relief and effect to their compositions, by a novel and daring opposition of light and shade. From him the surprising discovery was caught by Giorgione del Castel-franco, and carried to Venice, where, united to a new style of colouring, it rapidly spread its fascination, and became the foundation of the excellence of the Venetian school.

Chiar-oscuro and colouring, being but varied effects of the same medium, assimilate so kindly together, that, since the time of their junction at Venice, no school, and scarcely any individual artist, has existed, who has been eminent in one of those branches, without at the same time possessing considerable excellence in the other.

By this union, aided by the introduction of oil painting, which supplies, through the medium of glazing, richer, deeper, and more perfect shadows and tones than any other method, the Venetians were enabled to give that clearness, force, relief,—in short, that perfect illusion, which amounted, in their

limited conceptions of the subject, to a complete representation of nature :— I say, their limited conceptions; because, though “the gorgeous East with richest hand” showered pearls and gold into the lap of Venice (and painting was in consequence liberally and enthusiastically encouraged), she possessed no remains of antique sculpture, to elevate the imaginations of her artists, generate ideas of true beauty, and lead them to attempt combinations of greater purity and consistency than are to be met with in ordinary life. Acquainted more with Asiatic luxury than with Grecian taste, the painters of Venice sought rather for magnificence than grandeur,—are more remarkable for splendour than for elegance, and possess more truth of effect than refinement of character in their works.

Correctness of design being in nowise necessary to illusion, was of course neither attempted nor thought of by them; and painting, under their tuition, instead of speaking an universal language, equally intelligible to all nations and in all ages, only learned to speak with surprising volubility her mother-tongue. It cannot be denied that they painted nature; but it was nature in its every-day dress, disfigured by accident, unchosen, unimproved, and “sent to its account with all its imperfections on its head.”

Of the works of Giorgione, the real founder of the Venetian school, there are many specimens now existing in this country, which, for harmony of colour and depth of tone are still deservedly objects of great admiration, and prove him to have excelled his master Da Vinci in these qualities, as much as he was himself afterwards exceeded by Titian.

His genius, indeed, was such, that, had he not been cut off by the plague at the early age of thirty-two, it is not probable that he would ever have been outstripped by his more fortunate rival and companion.

As Titian, though a great master of *chiar'-oscuro*, was still more eminent for colouring, I shall reserve his character to be particularly discussed under that head, and pass on to the consideration of the merits of the Lombard school; at the top of which stands the name of Antonio Allegri, commonly called, from the place of his birth Correggio. Of this extraordinary man, who, to use the words of Milton,

“Untwisted all the strings that tie
The hidden soul of harmony,”—

the accounts which are transmitted to us are more confused, contradictory, and uncertain, than those of any other painter of eminence. His age, the times of his birth and death, and most of the circumstances of his life, are enveloped in an obscurity which seems to increase with every attempt at its elucidation.

By some we are told that he was born, bred, and lived in poverty and wretchedness, and that he died at the age of forty, from the fatigue of carrying home a sack of halfpence, or copper money, paid him for one of his grandest works; and we are called upon to admire and respect a genius, who, against the ordinary course of things,—without having seen Rome, the works of the ancients, or those of the great painters, his contemporaries,—without favour or protection, or going from home to seek them,—in straitened circumstances, and with no other helps than his own industry, the contemplation of nature, and the affection he had for his art, has produced works of a sublime kind, both for thought and execution.

On the other hand, Mengs, his most devoted admirer, who made every

possible inquiry concerning him, contends that he was of a good family, and lived in opulence; that he had every advantage of education, both general and professional; that he had been at Rome and Florence, and had consequently seen the works of Da Vinci, Michael Angelo, and Raffaele; that he studied philosophy, mathematics, painting, sculpture, and architecture, and conversed familiarly with the most famous professors of his time.

Though this latter opinion seems to be founded on but a questionable authority, I own I am inclined to adopt it in a great degree, as, to any attentive examiner of the works of Correggio, the former account must appear absolutely incredible. The evidence of his works would lead one to conclude, that he had not only seen those of the last-mentioned painters, but also the works of Titian; and that he had borrowed the elements of light and shade from the first, something of the grandeur of his contour from the second, and colouring from the last; to which he superadded qualities peculiarly his own, and formed a style, which, though less learned in design than that of Michael Angelo, and less true in colouring than that of Titian, infinitely exceeded Da Vinci's in force, and was, on the whole, more exquisitely captivating to the eye than anything that had yet appeared in the art.

Of *chiar'-oscu*ro, on the grandest scale, as it extends to the regulation of the *whole* of a work, he was certainly the inventor. Antecedently to him no painter had attempted, or even imagined the magic effect of this principle, which is strikingly predominant in all that remains of Correggio, from his widely extended cupolas to the smallest of his oil paintings: its sway was uncontrollable; parts were enlightened, extended, curtailed, obscured, or buried in the deepest shade, in compliance with its dictates; and whatever interfered (even correctness of form, propriety of action, and characteristic attitude,) was occasionally sacrificed.

To describe his practice will be in a great degree to repeat my observations on *chiar'-oscu*ro in its enlarged sense. By classing his colours, and judiciously dividing them into few and large masses of bright and obscure, gently rounding off his light, and passing, by almost imperceptible degrees, through pellucid demi-tints and warm reflexions, into broad, deep, and transparent shade, he artfully connected the fiercest extremes of light and shadow, harmonized the most intense opposition of colours, and combined the greatest possible effect with the sweetest and softest *repose* imaginable. The same principle of easy gradation seems to have operated as his guide in respect to design, as well as in colouring and *chiar'-oscu*ro. By avoiding straight lines, sharp angles, all abrupt breaks, sudden transitions, and petty inflexions, and running by gentle degrees from convex to concave, and *vice versâ*, together with the adoption of such forms and attitudes as admitted this practice in the highest degree, he gave his figures that ease, elegance, and flexibility, that *inimitable grace*, which, in honour of the inventor, has since obtained the appellation of *Correggiesque*!

This rare union of grace, harmony, and effect, forms the skill of Correggio, which, whilst it operates, suspends judgement and disarms criticism. Entranced and overcome by pleasing sensation, the spectator is often compelled to forget incorrectness of drawing and deficiency of expression and character. These defects, however, it has already been observed, are but occasional; and though, in comparing him with Raffaele, it may justly be said, that the one painted best the effects of body, and the other those of mind, it must also be acknowledged that modesty, sweetness, and the effusions of maternal tender-

ness have never been more forcibly expressed than by the pencil of Correggio.

The turn of his thoughts, also, in regard to particular subjects, was often, in the highest degree, poetical and uncommon; of which it will be sufficient to give, as an instance, his celebrated *Notte*, or painting of the Nativity of Christ, in which the circumstance of his making all the light of the picture emanate from the child, striking upward on the beautiful face of the mother, and, in all directions, on the surrounding objects, may challenge comparison with any invention in the whole circle of art, both for the splendour and sweetness of the effect, which nothing can exceed, and for its happy appropriation to the person of him, who was born to dispel the clouds of ignorance, and diffuse the light of truth over a darkened world!

This circumstance, at once sublime, beautiful, and picturesque, is one of those rare instances of supreme felicity, by which a man may be said to be lost in his own glory. The thought has been seized with such avidity, and produced so many imitations, that no one is accused of plagiarism; the real author is forgotten, and the public, habituated to consider the incident as naturally a part of the subject, have long ceased to inquire when or by whom it was invented.

From Correggio, in pursuing the progress of *chiar-oscuro*, we naturally turn our attention to the Carracci, the founders of the Bolognese school, who, though not absolutely equal to their great predecessor in *chiar-oscuro*, excelled him in design, and perhaps in some other branches of the art. Ludovico, in particular, is highly and justly extolled for the modest breadth, and affecting simplicity, of his style, and pointed out by Sir Joshua Reynolds, as the best model for that dignified tone, that *solemn twilight*, so productive of sentiment, and so properly and exclusively suited to all subjects of a grave, philosophical, or religious character.

Ludovico, with his two cousins, Annibal and Agostino Carracci, attempted, by selecting the beauties, supplying the defects, correcting the errors and avoiding the extremes of their predecessors, to unite all the excellencies of the art, and form a perfect style:—a plan, which has been derided by some eminent critics, as absurd, visionary, and impracticable; but as they have neglected to show wherein the different merits of the different schools are incompatible with each other, so they have failed to convince me that the attempt to reconcile them was ill-judged, and tended, directly or indirectly, to mediocrity and the extinction of character. What if the Carracci have not completely succeeded? What if they be, in some degree, inferior to each of those whom they proposed to imitate, in his particular way?—to Michael Angelo in design, to Raffaele in expression, to Titian in colour, and to Correggio in force and harmony of *chiar-oscuro*? The combination, as far as it goes, is excellent; and that it is not more so, is undoubtedly owing to nothing absurd in the attempt, but to insufficiency of ability to carry it properly into execution. For where is the proof, that all the different beauties of art are not in perfect unison with each other? That the whole is more difficult to grasp than a part, is not to be denied; but let us beware of making our feebleness the measure of possibility. Had there been more correctness in the drawing, more elevation in the character, and more truth in the expressions of the celebrated picture by Correggio, just mentioned, can it be supposed that its effect would therefore have been less splendid and fascinating? and had the Transfiguration, by Raffaele, partaken more of Michael Ange-

lo's grand style of design, and of the breadth and splendour of Correggio's chiar'-oscuro, which the subject seems particularly to demand, can it be supposed that these excellencies would have lessened in any degree the truth of expression, which it now possesses, and that it would therefore have become insipid? Can it be supposed that The Hours leading out the Horses of the Sun, painted by Julio Romano, would have been less poetical and celestial, had they possessed more harmony, brilliancy, and truth of colouring? Yet this has been supposed, and by a writer whose name I revere, and whose works will be an honour to this country as long as taste and genius continue to attract admiration. But though I respect *him* much, I respect *truth* more, which I think will bear me out in maintaining the contrary opinion. Celestial objects, according to our conceptions of them, differ from terrestrial ones, not in essence but in beauty, not in principle but in power; and our representations of them should possess all the splendour and effect, as well as all the vigour, spirit, and elevation of character, possible. To a certain portion of spirit and character it was doubtless owing, that in spite of, and not by the aid of, defects, Julio Romano's horses became objects of admiration; and, had these excellencies been joined to the others with which they are always associated in our minds, the effect of the work must have been proportionally greater, and it would have consequently stood still higher in the scale of art.

Such paradoxical opinions cannot be too closely examined, as they tend directly to arrest the progress of art, and prevent those attempts, by which alone perfection must (if ever) be obtained. For what is perfection, but the complete union of all parts of the art, and, if they are incompatible, what have we to hope for?

But the Carracci do not stand in need of arguments in behalf of their principles, while such a work exists, as that (which all must remember,) of The three Marys weeping over the Body of Christ; in which are actually combined the excellencies of drawing, chiar'-oscuro, colouring, composition, and expression, each to a degree which we have seldom seen surpassed; and, had it possessed a corresponding dignity and beauty of character, I should not hesitate to place it at least on a level with the first productions of modern art.

This picture alone sufficiently justifies the rationality of those gigantic attempts which, had they been completely successful, would have involved the names of the proudest predecessors of the Carracci in comparative obscurity: this answers all objections to their plan, affords a complete evidence of its practicability, and warrants the hope of its being, at some future period, carried more effectually into execution.

The deep-toned sobriety of the Carracci was quickly followed by the meteor-like glare of Caravaggio, who, from love of novelty, or an insatiable desire of force, too frequently disjointed his compositions, separated every spot of light by intense shadow, plunged at every step from noon-day to midnight, and, instead of *conducting*, tore his chiar'-oscuro to rags: *his*, indeed, is not so properly chiar'-oscuro, as light and shadow run mad.

By his want of connecting demi-tints and reflected lights, and total neglect of every kind of gradation, he missed all the unity, harmony and grace, so delightful in Correggio. Hence, though he undoubtedly possessed great force, great boldness of penciling, and freshness and truth of colour, he cannot, except in very particular subjects, be safely recommended as an object for imitation. He has, nevertheless, in his happier moments, produced works of very considerable merit. His Entombing of Christ, for instance,

now in the Museum at Paris, for *chiar-oscuro* and composition, as well as the excellencies above mentioned, may challenge comparison with most of the productions of the Carracci; and no story was ever more happily told on canvass, than that of his Gamblers cheating a young man at cards. Innocent cullibility on one part, and brutality and cunning on the other, cannot be more forcibly expressed; each face is a volume, in which the whole history of the man, past, present, and future, is written in legible and indelible characters.

It must be understood, that the great fault of Caravaggio is the want of connecting gradation, and not the depth of his shadows, without which, on a flat surface, what relief or projection can be obtained? Sir Joshua Reynolds justly blames his immediate predecessors, and youthful contemporaries, for a mawkish insipidity, chiefly owing to a timid deficiency of shadow, of which, both by precept and example, he recommends the liberal use, as also of colours vividly and distinctly opposed to each other, and justifies himself by an appeal to the works of the greatest masters, in which there is generally found, in every picture, a part as light, and a part as dark, as possible. As a general rule, Sir Joshua's advice is undoubtedly excellent; but it is not necessary, like Bottom in the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, and Caravaggio, to play the tyrant, and make all split on every occasion. On the contrary, subjects will sometimes occur, that admit, nay, that require, a very different practice. An instance of this kind will readily present itself to the memory of every one who has seen the picture of the *Deluge* by Poussin. In this work there appears neither white nor black, nor blue, nor red, nor yellow: the whole mass is, with little variation, of a sombre gray, the true resemblance of a dark and humid atmosphere, by which every object is rendered indistinct and almost colourless. This is both a faithful and a poetical conception of the subject: nature seems faint, half dissolved, and verging on annihilation, and the pathetic solemnity, grandeur, and simplicity of the effect, which can never be exceeded, is entirely derived from the painter's having judiciously departed from, and gone in direct opposition to, general practice.

That there is no rule without an exception, is proverbially true; and, far from contradicting it in regard to painting, I am inclined to believe, that every subject, if properly treated, would require some deviation from the established laws; some license, some appropriate management peculiar to itself; such as we see exemplified in the *Notte* by Correggio, and the *Deluge* by Poussin. Till something of this kind happens, we may conclude, the subject has not been perfectly conceived, and is open for further trials; but, when the blow has once been thus happily struck, there is nothing left for followers but humble imitation. The style of Caravaggio astonished by its boldness, delighted by its novelty, and, for a time, produced many imitators, among whom we may reckon the celebrated names of Guido Reni, and Guercino da Cento, who, though they softened somewhat the hardness of his *chiar-oscuro*, never equalled him in the freshness and clearness of his colouring. Guido, indeed, finding himself unequal to his model, soon quitted the style altogether, and adopted another in perfect opposition, which, though a better vehicle for mannered beauty and theatric grace, was as far removed by its flimsiness from true taste, as was that of Caravaggio by its outrageous strength.

The nature of my subject requires that I should follow the art from Italy

into Holland, where, though its revival cannot by any means be said to be complete, the branch of which I am now treating, as also some others, was carried to a perfection highly deserving notice.

To the Dutch school, all that has been said of the Venetian applies with double and treble force. Ugliness was beauty to them. They not only did not seek what was grand, elevated, and perfect, but studiously avoided it; and climbing downwards with an inverted taste, seemed to delight in baseness and deformity, and to make them objects of preference. In their histories they sacrificed without mercy all decorum, all propriety, all regard to costume, all beauty, truth, and grandeur of character. Gods, emperors, heroes, sages, and beauties, were all taken out of the same pot, and metamorphosed by one stroke of the pencil into Dutchmen. Noah was only the first skipper, and Abraham a fat burgomaster of Amsterdam.

Yet, in spite of meanness and disproportion, in spite of their neglect of some rules, and their ignorance and open defiance of others,—how vain is judgement, criticism how weak!—they have produced works, which the purest sensibility and the most refined taste cannot reject, which the best cultivated eye dwells on with pleasure, and by which we are, for a moment at least, compelled to forget that the art has anything of a higher class to bestow!

There are, indeed, shallow and supercilious critics, without comprehension to take in the whole of art, without judgement to discern all the ends proposed by it, and without taste to relish every kind of excellence—who, with a morbid appetite, rejecting what is offered, constantly sigh for all that is absent, and, with eager solicitude to be displeased, always dwell on defects and improprieties—who see only Raffaele's want of colour, Titian's want of form, Correggio's want of expression, and Rubens's want of grace;—such, ever ready to flatter themselves into the belief that they possess exquisite taste and refined judgement, will, doubtless, think the Dutch school altogether beneath their notice; but, hazardous as it may be, I will venture to say, that such an opinion can only be pronounced by those whose judgement is depraved, and who are totally devoid of taste. True critics, who exercise the rod not from vanity but from taste, not from malice but affection, who can discover and discriminate beauties from defects, however unhappily they may be mingled, will readily allow the claims of the Dutch artists to considerable praise.

At the head of the Dutch school, and foremost amongst those who, in the opinion of some critics, cut the knot instead of untying it, and burglariously entered the Temple of Fame by the window, stands the name of Rembrandt, called *Van Rhyn* from his birth-place, a village on that river near Leyden. His father, a miller, put his son under one Lastman, a tolerable painter of Amsterdam; but by what means he was led to adopt that peculiar manner which distinguishes his works is not now to be discovered. Of his singularities it is, however, recorded, that he used to ridicule the antique, and the ordinary methods of study, and that he had a large collection of strange dresses, old armour, and rich stuffs, which he called his antiques, and which it is obvious he made use of, as models, in his principal works. There is, also, a story related of him, which shows him to have been no less a humourist than a genius; which is, that finding his works, at one period of his life, accumulating on his hands, he resolved to make a sale of them; but, unfortunately, it seems, the public in Rembrandt's time very much resembled the public at present, and scorned to buy the works of a *living* artist. In

this dilemma he had no resource but to secrete himself, pretend to be dead, put his wife into widow's mourning, and order a mock funeral. After this his sale went on with uncommon success: when it was ended, Rembrandt rose from the dead, to the great joy of his disconsolate wife, and received the congratulations of his friends on the happy termination of his excellent joke. Being, at another time, reproached for the boldness and roughness of his manner of laying on his colours, he replied, "I am a painter, and not a dyer."

What was so happily said of Burke might with equal truth be applied to Rembrandt:

"Whose genius was such

That one never can praise it, or blame it too much."

He seemed born to confound all rules and reasoning. With the most transcendent merits he combines the most glaring faults, and reconciles us to them; he charms without beauty, interests without grace, and is sublime in spite of disgusting forms and the utmost vulgarity of character. His deficiencies would have fairly annihilated any other man; yet he still justly claims to be considered as a genius of the first class. Of *chiar'-oscuro* he ranged the whole extent, and exemplified all its effects in all its degrees, changes, and harmonies, from the noon-day blaze to when the

"Dying embers round the room

Teach light to counterfeit a gloom."

In richness and truth of colouring, in copiousness of invention and energy of expression, he equalled the greatest of his predecessors, and whatever he attempted, he rendered with a degree of truth, of reality, of illusion, that defies all comparison. By these powers he seemed to be independent of his subject; it mattered not what he painted, his pencil, like the finger of Midas, turned every thing he touched to gold; it made defects agreeable, gave importance to trifles, and begat interest in the bosom of barrenness and insipidity itself.

But, though thus gifted to dwell with nature in her simplest retirement, he was no less qualified, with a master's hand and poet's fire, to follow and arrest her in her wildest flights; all that was great, striking, and uncommon in her scenery, was familiar to him; yet he chiefly delighted in obscurity and repose; mystery and silence floated round his pencil, and dreams, visions, witcheries, and incantations he alone, with no less magic power, rendered probable, awful, and interesting. In short, so great and original were his powers, that he seems to be one, who would have discovered the art, had it never before existed.

Rembrandt, with all his powers, is a master whom it is most exceedingly dangerous to imitate; his excellencies are so fascinating, that we are apt first to forgive, and, lastly, to fall in love even with his faults, or, at least, to think the former cheaply purchased with the incumbrance of the latter. But let the student carefully remember, that the imitator of any individual master, like the imitator of individual nature, must never hope to occupy a station in the first class of artists; and that defects like those of Rembrandt, and most of the Dutch school, even if associated with equal excellence, can never hope to be forgiven a second time.

LECTURE IV.—*Read at the Royal Academy, March 9, 1807.*

I SHALL, this evening, proceed to the consideration of Colouring, the third part of painting, which, though confessedly of inferior consequence to design and *chiar'-oscuro*, must yet be deemed sufficiently important to occupy a large share of the attention of an artist, who wishes to give a correct and an agreeable representation of nature. Hence it may be thought necessary, that he should study the laws of optics, be intimately acquainted with all the phenomena of the reflection and refraction of light, of its composition, and divisibility into red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, and violet-coloured rays, and that he should examine into the nature of the surfaces and textures of different bodies, by which they absorb, divide, transmit, or reflect light, and consequently give birth to that astonishing variety of hues, under which they are exhibited to the eye.

These are studies, which, doubtless, ought not to be altogether discouraged; for, not to speak of the pleasure, that must result to the artist, from his being able truly and solidly to account for all the various appearances of light, he cannot, of course, be too well acquainted with the nature and properties of those colours, by whose instrumentality he is to give life and energy to his future designs. But it cannot be improper to inform him, that too much stress may easily be laid on knowledge of this kind; Titian, Rubens, and Vandyck probably knew nothing of the divisibility of light, and little more, perhaps, of the laws of optics, than what must necessarily result from practice; and it must reluctantly be confessed, that the rest is but remotely connected with the art, and that the discoveries of Newton and Berkeley, however sublime and beautiful, are but little calculated to assist the production of the sublime and beautiful in painting.

If poets, of all times, have considered colour as one of the chief beauties in nature, it can be no wonder that painters should delight in it, and be too often inclined to overrate its importance. From a conviction of this general tendency it is, that the united voices of all teachers are lifted against the fascinating charms of this *Cleopatra* of the art, for which hundreds "have lost the world, and been content to lose it."

Colouring, says a great critic, if once attained in a high degree, generally disdains subordination, and engrosses the whole attention. Those who have once gained supreme dominion over the eye, will hardly resign it to court the more coy approbation of the mind—the approbation of a few, opposed to the admiration of all! Poussin thinks that colouring needs little attention, and that practice alone will give a reasonable proficiency in it. Annibal Carracci delivered it as his opinion, that almost the whole art consisted in a good outline; and Sir Joshua Reynolds, the slave and master of colouring, to gain which he almost lost himself, though sedulously devoted to it in practice, seems, in his writings, to consider it as rather detrimental, if not incompatible with sentiment and the grand style of art.

The judgements of those, who have failed in their attempts to colour, like the fox's judgement in grapes, may reasonably be suspected of proceeding from sinister motives; but the judgement of him, who, from his superlative excellence in that branch, might boldly challenge comparison with the greatest masters, claims to be considered with all possible respect and attention. It is not, therefore, without some alarm, that I feel myself compelled to op-

pose his opinion, which to me appears not to be founded on a clear perception of anything, in the nature of colouring, repugnant to expression, character, and sentiment, but rather drawn from the flagrant abuse of it by the Venetian and Flemish painters, and a supposition that the deficiency of it in the works of the Romans and Florentines was not owing to incapacity, but to their rejection of its blandishments, on a conviction of their interfering with, or destroying the effect of, those excellencies, to which they were more immediately desirous of paying attention. This is so far from being the case, that Michael Angelo, it is well known, was exceedingly charmed by Titian's colouring, and very solicitous of joining, through the means of Sebastian del Piombo, the Venetian manner of painting to his own grand style of design; and Raffaello who panted after perfection, put himself under Fra Bartolomeo for the express purpose of studying colouring, wishing to add to his already magnificent *stock of merits*, all those necessary to produce that *truth and illusion*, so agreeable in the works of many comparatively inferior *masters*. Hence I am convinced, that, far from considering it as detrimental, they thought it indispensable to perfection. And the authority of the ancients, which, in regard to matters of taste, must be considered as little short of revelation, is also evidently in favour of this opinion; since we find that, amongst the Greeks, Zeuxis, Parrhasius, and Apelles, their most famous painters, were also the most excellent colourists; and, if we examine the inordinate praises bestowed on the last and greatest of the three, it will be found to turn chiefly on the beauty of his colouring; the famous Coan Venus, painted by him, was the admiration of every succeeding age, till the time of Cicero, who marks its perfection in colour, as approaching the truth, softness, and warmth of real flesh and blood. The same artist, after this, attempted a second Venus, which was to have exceeded all his former productions; but dying before he had executed more than the head and breasts, no painter, we are told, (such was its superlative excellence,) could be prevailed on to attempt its completion. Now, as we must suppose, in this case, that the idea, character, and style of design, were determined, it seems to follow, that what the artists dreaded in particular was a comparison of their *colouring* with the truly *imitable* beauty of his. Pliny, also, tells us of a Warrior painted by him, which challenged nature itself; and Propertius pays him a most elegant compliment, and at the same time gives us the most perfect notion of his extraordinary merit, when, dissuading his mistress from the use of paint, he advises her to trust to her real complexion, which he compares to the native carnations of Apelles. By the great praises lavished on the colouring of Apelles, it must not be inferred that he was deficient in other parts of the art; the age, in which he lived, was distinguished above all others, which preceded or came after it, for the utmost perfection in design. A weakness therefore of the first painter, in the first branch of the art, could not possibly have been passed over unnoticed and uncensured. There is, indeed, the best reason for supposing him, in nearly all parts of the art, equal, and, in most, superior to any artist of his time. His character, therefore, may very properly be recommended to the consideration of those sanguine admirers of the Florentine and Roman schools, those greensick lovers of chalk, brickdust, charcoal, and old tapestry, who are so ready to decry the merits of colouring, and to set it down as a kind of superfluity in art.

The grand style consists, not in neglecting to give all the apparent truth, force, and reality of objects to the eye, but in supplying the defects, and

avoiding the redundancies of individual and imperfect forms; and colouring is not less capable, by rejecting what is merely accidental, and copying only the general and characteristic hue of each object, of being elevated to the same ideal standard. By this simple and refined principle, operating equally in all parts of the art, the ancients carried it at last to such perfection, that nature "toiled after it in vain." Propertius, as we see by the foregoing compliment, made it a merit in her to rise to a competition with painting, in respect to colour; and the poets and orators, when they wished to give the highest possible idea of personal beauty, always had recourse, for a comparison, to the works of the statuary. Thus Ovid, speaking of Cyllarus, the fairest of the Centaurs, celebrates him as vying in perfection with the most admirable statues:

"A pleasing vigour his fair face express'd;
His neck, his hands, his shoulders and his breast
Did next in gracefulness and beauty stand
To breathing figures of the sculptor's hand."

For these reasons, though no one can be a greater admirer, I might say adorer of the works of Michael Angelo, and Raffaele, than myself, I confess I can no longer consider them as improved by defect: I will not believe that

"Half their beauties to their spots we owe."

But, great as they were in design, invention, and expression, as colouring is capable of a corresponding elevation of character, and has often been made equally a vehicle of sentiment, I cannot but suppose that their merits would have been considerably augmented by the addition of beautiful and appropriate colour.

But, in thus protesting against the neglect of colouring, I would by no means be considered as giving a sanction to the abuse of it. Let me, therefore, caution the student against that vulgar error, the mistaking fine colours for fine colouring, which consists, not in the gaudiness, but the truth, harmony, and transparency of the tints, and the depth of the tones. Let him beware of being captivated by the ostentatious splendour of the Venetian and Flemish schools; the terrors of the Crucifixion must not be lost in the magnificent pomp of a triumphal show, nor the pathetic solemnity of the Last Supper be disturbed by the impertinent gaiety of a bacchanalian revel. This is abhorrent to true taste; nor shall the authors of such mockeries escape censure, however great their powers or celebrated their names.

Colour, the peculiar object of the most delightful of our senses, is associated in our minds with all that is rare, precious, delicate, and magnificent in nature. A fine complexion, in the language of the poet, is the dye of love, a hint of something celestial: the ruby, the rose, the diamond, the youthful blush, the orient morning, and the variegated splendour of the setting sun, consist of, or owe their charms principally to, colour. To the sight it is the index of gaiety, richness, warmth, and animation; and should the most experienced artist, by design alone attempt to represent the tender freshness of spring, the fervid vivacity of summer, or the mellow abundance of autumn, what must be his success? Colouring is the sunshine of the art, that clothes poverty in smiles, and renders the prospect of barrenness itself agreeable, while it heightens the interest, and doubles the charms of beauty.

However proper, therefore, it may be to place colouring in a subordinate rank to design, when we consider its various beauties, uses and effects in the art, it will be found no easy task to do it justice. He that would excel in it, must study it in several points of view, in respect to the whole and in respect to the parts of a picture, in respect to mind and in respect to body, and in regard to itself alone. Like sound in poetry, colouring, in painting, should always be an echo to the sense. The true colourist, therefore, will always, in the first place, consider the nature of his subject, whether grave or gay, magnificent or melancholy, heroic or common: and, according to the time and place, whether his scene be intended to represent day or night, sunshine or gloom, a cavern, a prison, a palace, or the open air, such will be the predominant hues of his piece. Colour must also be employed to harmonize, invigorate, soften, and aid his *chiar-oscuro*, in giving shape and unity to the masses of brightness and obscurity, necessary to bring out a striking and an agreeable general effect, and in distinguishing by their depth, strength, or brilliancy, the principal and subordinate figures, groups, and actions of the piece, each in its proper degree; by which the eye is enabled to rest undisturbed on any separate part, to travel undistracted over each in succession, or, by fixing at once on the principal object, to enjoy the full and united impression of the whole.

In regard to the parts of a picture, it will not only be necessary that every individual object should properly cooperate in the general effect, but that each should likewise be properly distinguished from all others. It will be useful to the artist, therefore, to study the associations of colour with our ideas of character. *White*, the symbol of innocence, and the tender tints of spring analogous to the opening of human life, become the proper decoration and accompaniment of childhood and youth; greater strength and vivacity of colour suit a riper age; and thus, advancing through every gradation of richness and depth, till we come to "*black, staid wisdom's hue*," every actor that enters on his scene, the young, the old, the male, the female, the slave, the hero, the magistrate, the prince, and the philosopher; in short, all stages of humanity, from the infant mewling in his nurse's arms to the decrepitude of second childishness, will derive from the freshness, brilliancy, harmony, force, gravity, or sombreness of his tints, its characteristic colour and shade of difference, both in regard to complexion and dress, the essence and the accident.

Colour not only pleases by its thousand delicate hues and harmonious gradations, but serves in nature, and must be employed in art, to characterize and distinguish the various qualities and textures of different bodies and surfaces, as the tenderness and warmth of flesh, the hardness of stone, the polish of metals, the richness of velvet, and the transparency of glass, in all their varied situations of light, shade, or reflected light, and of proximity to, or distance from, the eye. Nor is its operation merely physical, and confined to body: every passion and affection of the human mind has its appropriate *tint*, and colouring, if properly adapted, lends its aid, with powerful effect, in the just discrimination and forcible expression of them; it heightens joy, warms love, inflames anger, deepens sadness, and adds coldness to the cheek of death itself.

The arrangement of colours, another important point, must be regulated by laws similar to those laid down respecting the management of light and shadow; they should each have a principal, and a few other subordinate

masses of unequal sizes and irregular shapes, unless the subject expressly demands the contrary. This will be following the common course of nature, which always tends to variety, inequality, and irregularity, except there is some specific purpose to be answered by a different mode of arrangement. It will also be found to correspond with the practice of the most approved masters in colouring; and those who are much conversant with pictures will easily recollect instances, where the painter having been under the necessity of laying in one place a large mass of a particular colour, has, by the introduction of bunches of flowers, pieces of drapery, or other objects, contrived to disseminate smaller masses of a similar colour in other parts of the picture, to keep up a due balance and harmony throughout the whole.

He that has attended to all this has done much, but much yet remains to be done. It has often been remarked, that colours are to the eye, what flavours are to the palate, and sounds to the ear; and, as music should not only be well composed, and played in time and in tune, but the tones also of the voices and instruments should be touching and agreeable; so, in painting, the colours should not only be applied properly, and arranged with judgement and taste, but they should also be capable of affording pleasure by their own intrinsic beauty, by their brilliancy, freshness, harmony, and transparency; these constitute the essence and exquisite flavour of colouring; and, though many painters are unquestionably highly censurable for the absurdities and improprieties into which they have run to *gain* them, it cannot be denied that they ought to obtain in all subjects, in order to render the imitation of nature complete, and perfectly agreeable.

Colour being, exclusively and solely, an object of sight, must obviously be less under the power of language, than almost any other part of the art. The student, however, may be told that the freshness and brilliancy of colours depend, in a great measure, on their purity, that is, on keeping them as little mixed together, as little muddled by vehicles and subsequent attempts to mend the first touches, as the power of the artist and the nature of the subject will admit of; and the brilliancy may be still further increased, by judiciously contrasting them with their opposites. Red, for instance, will have a more lively effect in the neighbourhood of blue; and yellow, opposed to purple. White will increase in vivacity by being near black, and black will appear more intense, if placed on a ground of white. Laying them also in situations admitting of instantaneous comparison, is another mode of heightening the apparent vivacity of colours. The ill-looking may appear well-favoured, if accompanied by those that are worse: thus, a moderately lively red, or yellow, will appear brilliant, if surrounded by others of the same class, but of a more depraved quality. Richness and transparency may be obtained by glazing, and passing the colours one over another without suffering them to mix; and harmony is secured by keeping up the same tone through the whole, and not at all by any sort of arrangement, as some have erroneously supposed. These circumstances will be plain and intelligible to all, who are a little initiated in the theory and management of colours; but they will also find, to their sorrow, that brilliancy and freshness may easily be pushed into rawness and crudeness; that transparency may easily degenerate into flimsiness and want of solidity; that harmony easily slides into jaundice and muddiness; that spirit and cleanness of touch quickly run into hardness, and softness into woolliness and want of precision:—and, between these almost meeting extremes, who shall tell them when and where to stop? This is altogether

beyond the power of words, and is attainable only by a good organ, long practice, and the study of nature and the best masters.

In studying and copying the works of old and celebrated masters, it is proper, however, that the student should never lose sight of one circumstance, *which is*, that they are often, if not always, so changed by time, dust, and varnish, that it is necessary to consider, rather what they once were, than what they are at present. He must acquire the power of seeing the brilliancy of their tints through the cloud by which it is obscured: otherwise he will be likely to imbibe false notions on the subject, and become a colourist of his own formation, with ideas equally remote from nature and from art, from the genuine practice of the masters and the real appearances of things. It would be as tedious as useless, to enter here into a detail of the various materials used in painting, and the different modes of applying them, the proper knowledge of which it is the province of experiment and practice alone to teach. Suffice it to say, that the genuine principles of colouring are the same in all, and that, under skilful management, they are all capable of producing admirable effects; but, though every student may safely be left to his own choice of his vehicles and instruments, it is highly necessary to caution him against any undue reliance on them, and to remark, that much imposition and quackery has at all times prevailed in respect to this comparatively insignificant part of the art.

Not long since, we were astonished by the proposals of a very young lady, scarce in her teens, for unveiling her Venetian secret, and teaching Royal Academicians to colour, at five guineas a-head; by which young and old, learned and unlearned, were equally captivated, and the grave biographer of our illustrious first President so dazzled, as to lament most piteously that great man's misfortune, in being cut off, before he had had an opportunity of purchasing her inestimable and cheaply proffered favours. At another time, still more wonderful receipts are announced for making Titians and Correggios by a chemical process, and every day some new graphic Dr. Graham or Brodwin, with a confidence that stupifies common sense, and dares incredulity to silence, bursts upon us, and boasts the infallibility of his nostrums for producing fine pictures without the help of science, genius, taste, or industry. Oil, water, varnish, gums, wool, worsted, pokers, chalk, charcoal, and brick-dust, have each their several champions, who triumph and fall by turns:

"Thus have I seen, engaged in mortal fight,
A sturdy barber beat a collier white;
In comes the brickdust-man with grime bespread,
And beats the collier and the barber red."

All which might well be laughed at, if it had not the mischievous effect of diverting the student's attention from the end to the means, disposing him to the worst kind of idleness, and filling his head with a farrago, as pernicious and nugatory as the pursuit of the philosopher's stone, or the perpetual motion; and as little connected with the real essence of painting as writing with red or black ink, or upon crown, double elephant, or foolscap paper, is with that of poetry.

Sir Joshua Reynolds, in his admirable Discourses, seems particularly anxious to guard the young practitioner against such vain pretenders and wonder-mongers, by exposing the danger of his fancying the art to consist of anything like the tricks of a juggler, or imagining that excellence is to be

obtained any otherwise than by incessant practice and well-directed study. "Labour," says he, quoting from the ancients, "is the price which the gods have set upon everything truly valuable."

In allusion to the uses and effects of colouring, when applied properly, that is, in assistance, and not to the exclusion, of other excellencies, Fresnoy not improperly calls it the handmaid of her sister Design, for whom she procures lovers by dressing, painting, ornamenting and making her appear more bewitching than she naturally is; and thus, as Dryden observes in his parallel betwixt poetry and painting, it is the versification, tropes, figures, and other elegancies of language and expression, *the colouring of poetry*, that charm the reader and beautify the fable or design: but, in both arts, if the latter be mean or vicious, the cost of language and colouring will be wholly thrown away, like a rich habit, jewels, and other finery, on an ordinary woman, which, instead of rendering her charming, only tend to illuminate and draw her defects more strongly into notice, making what was in itself bad, appear ten times worse by comparison.

Colouring being to superficial observers one half of painting, and that the most attractive, it has perhaps, in all parts of the world, been nearly coeval with Design. The Florentine artists studied and practised it from the earliest time, but apparently with a success by no means answerable to their efforts. Ignorant of the principles of *chiar'-oscuro*, their utmost exertions could never have enabled them to do more than rival the king of diamonds. It is unnecessary, therefore, to trace the history of colouring further back than the latter end of the fifteenth century, when its true birth seems to have taken place at Venice:—at least, there the rudiments of all that makes it valuable and agreeable, appear to have been invented by Giorgione, of whom I have spoken in a former Lecture, and there they were first successfully cultivated and brought to perfection by Titiano da Cador.

Without meaning to detract anything from the unquestionable merits of these great men, I cannot but observe that this extraordinary change and improvement in the style of colouring must in part, also, have been owing to the introduction of oil-painting from Flanders, which took place about the period mentioned, and in time entirely superseded the more ancient practice of painting in fresco or water-colours; a method which, notwithstanding some advantages in respect to freshness and facility, totally precludes the possibility of producing the depth of tone, transparency, force, mellowness, and finish, attainable by painting in oil.

Titian, whose name, like that of Apelles of old, is now synonymous with all that is exquisite in colour, was born about the year 1480, and discovering at an early age a strong propensity to painting, was placed, when ten or eleven years old, under the tuition of Gian. Bellino, at that time a painter of eminence at Venice, but whose stiff, ungraceful style of design and flat meagre manner of colouring were little calculated to develop and forward the first-rate powers of his pupil. Happily, however, about the year 1507, Giorgione, being arrived at Venice from Florence and Leonardo da Vinci, Titian was so warmed and captivated by the unusual boldness and richness of his style, that, immediately turning out of doors all that he had learned in the school of Bellino, he began afresh; and such was the assiduity with which he applied himself to the study and practice of the new manner, that, from the humble imitator, he very soon became the successful rival of Giorgione, nay more, his master; for being employed jointly with

Giorgione in the decoration of a palace at Venice, the latter was complimented by his friends, who were ignorant of the partnership, on the part that was painted by Titian, in which they told him he had perfectly outdone himself. This unlucky praise so shocked Giorgione, that, leaving the work unfinished, he for some days hid himself in his house, and from that time forswore all friendship and acquaintance with Titian, who, in the sequel, seems to have excelled Giorgione as much in jealousy as in painting; for he is said, some years afterwards, to have barricaded his doors against Paris Bourdon, from very ill-founded fears of experiencing from that painter the same disagreeable effects which Giorgione had felt from his.

Like Michael Angelo in design, Titian, in colouring, may be regarded as the father of modern art. He first discovered and unfolded all its charms, saw the true end of imitation, showed what to aim at, when to labour, and where to stop; and *united breadth and softness to the proper degree of finishing*. He first dared all its depths, contrasted all its oppositions, and taught colour to glow and palpitate with all the warmth and *tenderness of real life*: free from tiresome detail, or disgusting minutiae, he rendered the roses and lilies of youth, the more ensanguined brown of manhood, and the pallid coldness of age, with truth and precision; and to every material object, hard or soft, rough or smooth, bright or obscure, opaque or transparent, his pencil imparted its true quality and appearance to the eye, with all the force and harmony of light, shade, middle tint, and reflexion; by which he so relieved, rounded and connected the whole, that we are almost irresistibly tempted to apply the test of another sense, and exclaim,

"Art thou not, pleasing vision! sensible
To feeling as to sight?"

Though gifted with a perfect knowledge of all the qualities and powers of colour, he never overstepped the modesty of nature, and made that ostentatious and meretricious use of it, so censurable in many of his followers. In his works, it is modest without heaviness, rich without glaring, and transparent without flimsiness: like a great orator, he never sacrifices the end to the means, subjugates sense to sound, or diverts the attention of the spectator from the subject to himself.

At an early period, he mounted the throne of portrait-painting, where, in the opinion of many, he still keeps his seat, unshaken, notwithstanding the violent attacks made on him at different periods by Vandyck, Rembrandt, and Reynolds. He combines resemblance with dignity, *costume* with taste, and art with simplicity; and equally delights the physiognomist, the artist, the antiquary, and the connoisseur. He was the inventor of all that is simple and captivating, or sublime and energetic, in landscape; and, in short, his powers changed the whole appearance, and still continue to influence the style of modern colouring;—for where is the painter, since his time, who has been exempted by grandeur or littleness, by genius or stupidity, from the necessity of imitating the works of Titian? To him we are, in some measure, indebted for the daring vivacity of Tintoretto, the freshness of Veronese, the strength of Carracci, the glowing splendour of Rubens, the truth of Rembrandt, and the taste of Vandyck. Justly, therefore, was it said of him by Michael Angelo, that, had he been a correct designer, he would have been the first painter that ever existed.

Titian, like his contemporaries, began his career by merely copying na-

ture, as she happened to present herself, without choice or selection, and laboured for a time in the labyrinth of littleness, meanness, and deformity; but a hint from Giorgione soon taught him, that taste was as requisite as industry, that labour might be misapplied, and truth itself become uninteresting, unnatural, and disgusting; that hairs, pores, pimples, warts, stains, freckles, and all the train of nauseous minutæ, on which inferior artists waste their puny powers, are incompatible with the true end of imitation; that the detail must be sunk in the essential and predominant qualities of bodies; and that the business of painting, like that of poetry, is not to give a feeble catalogue of particulars, but a characteristic, comprehensive, and animated impression of the whole. By the operation of this principle, extended from the parts to the individual, from the individual to the group, and thence to the entire mass of his composition, he reached the last and greatest excellence of colouring, that of giving the ruling passion or sentiment of his subject, in the prevailing tone or predominant hue of his piece.

From Titian we may learn what may be usefully applied, not only to ourselves, but to men in all situations and of all professions, as well as to painters; that *it is never too late to improve*;—for, at the age of seventy, and considerably upwards, we find him still rapidly advancing in his art. He had, it is true, at an early period, acquired breadth and grandeur in respect to colour, but he was not so happy as to burst the shackles of meanness, and emancipate himself from littleness, in respect to design, character, and invention, till very late in life. All obstacles, however, at length gave way to his powers and perseverance, and his latter works are not only remarkable for the most truly historic and awful tones of colour, for a freedom and felicity of execution beyond even the great promise of his former time, but also for a picturesque boldness and sublimity of conception, an energy of action and expression, and a learned and grand style of design, second to none but Michael Angelo. Those, therefore, who have seen the majestic figure of his Abraham about to offer up Isaac, his Cain and Abel, his David adoring over the headless trunk of Goliath, and his astonishing picture of the Death of Peter the Martyr, in which there is very nearly a complete union of all the excellencies of the art, will judge of the infinite importance of appropriate colour and execution to design, and be ready to cry out, with a certain critic, that “if Titian was not the greatest painter, he certainly produced the best pictures in the world.” Nature and fortune were equally kind to Titian: he had not to complain of having fallen on evil days and evil tongues; he was not suffered to waste his sweetness on the desert air; his works, sought for with avidity even in his lifetime, made their way, without the aid of time, dust, or varnish, unscrapped, unmended, and unsmoked, into the halls of the opulent, the palaces of the great, and the temples of the Deity; and, what is still more extraordinary, he was himself not forbidden to accompany them; his fame as a portrait painter procured him pressing invitations to attend every principal Court in Europe, all being desirous to be delivered down to posterity, or, as it was forcibly expressed by Charles V., of being rendered immortal, by the hand of Titian. He several times painted the portrait of that emperor, and once it is said, whilst at work, having dropped a pencil, Charles stooped for it, gave it him, and, on Titian apologizing with some confusion, said very courteously, “*Titian is worthy of being served by an emperor.*” Charles also conferred on him the dignities of a knight, and count palatine, and allowed him a liberal pension; at which finding his courtiers beginning

to express their envy and dissatisfaction, he plainly told them, as a reason for his bounty, and to mortify their malice, that he could, at any time, make as many nobles as he pleased, but that, with all his power, he could never make a Titian.

Thus honoured by the great, and his society courted by all the eminent men of his time, Titian was not more happy in his genius, than in all the circumstances of his life, which, prolonged to an almost patriarchal extent, in uninterrupted health, and with little abatement of vigour, was brought at last to a period by the plague, at the end of ninety-nine years.

Of the numerous followers of Titian, the principal names are those of Tintoretto, and Paolo Veronese, who possessed the full powers of their master, perhaps even greater, in execution and colouring, but who fall infinitely beneath him in judgement and delicacy of taste. "Of all the extraordinary geniuses," says Vasari, "who have practised the art of painting, for wild, capricious, extravagant, and fantastical inventions, for furious impetuosity and boldness in the execution of his works, there is none like Tintoretto; his strange whimsies are even beyond extravagance, and his works seem to be produced rather by chance than in consequence of any previous design; as if he wanted to convince the world that the art was a trifle of the most easy attainment." This criticism, though much too violent and severe in the main, as might be expected from a Florentine biographer, is not wholly inapplicable to all the Venetian painters, Titian alone excepted; for, in their works, it cannot be denied that we look in vain for that depth of thought, and those comprehensive and elevated views of nature, which dignify the productions of Rome and Florence; their subjects are, in general, treated without regard to propriety of character, historic truth, or the decorum and simplicity due to sacred and allegoric representation; and it is evident they considered the art, as consisting of little more than those second-rate excellencies, which so eminently characterize their own school. Hence, their grandest compositions seldom offer us anything but important events disgraced by mean and uncharacteristic agents, and vulgarized by the introduction of puerile and ridiculous circumstances:—

"What should be great they turn to farce!"

Everything appears to be burlesqued—put in the wrong place, or called by a wrong name.—We have portrait for history—Turks' heads for Apostles'—and Jews for Pagans. Fat, smirking damsels, (the painters' mistresses or those of their friends,) flaunting and bridling in all the tawdry dresses and fashionable airs of the time,—are indiscriminately christened *Holy Virgins*—*Pharaoh's daughters*—*Judiths*, *Rebecas*, and *Cleopatras*; and black boys, dwarfs, dogs gnawing bones, cats, and monkeys, are not seldom obtruded on the spectator, on the most solemn occasions, as the principal objects in the piece!!!

"The things we know are neither rich nor rare,
But wonder how the devil they got there!"

With all these defects, such are the powers displayed in their works, that many of those of a confessedly higher character would suffer considerably by being brought into comparison with them. It is to no purpose, that we know this effect ought not to take place; the eye is enthralled, and the understanding struggles in vain against the glowing harmony of their

colouring, the illusive vivacity of their imagery, and the sweeping rapidity of their execution, which, like the force of eloquence, bear down all before them, and often triumph over superior learning and truth.

But though their style, in general, was properly calculated only for occasions of gaiety, frivolity, and magnificence, they were not always unsuccessful in subjects of the grand and tragic kind. In the famous picture of the Crucifixion, by Tintoretto, *the ominous, terrific, and ensanguined hue of the whole, THE DISASTROUS TWILIGHT*, that indicates some more than mortal suffering, electrifies the spectator at the first glance, and is such an instance of the powerful application of colouring to expression, as has probably never been exceeded, except by Rembrandt in the bloodless, heart-appalling hue, spread over his Belshazzar's Vision of the Hand-writing on the Wall.

Built on the same principles, and partaking of the same beauties and defects as the Venetian, the Flemish school next demands our attention in regard to colouring; in which, if it is inferior to the former in depth, richness, and freshness, it is superior in vivacity, splendour, and transparency; if it yields in individual truth, it goes beyond in general harmony. In the Venetian, there is perhaps more strength,—in the Flemish more softness: the one may be said to give us the tints of autumn, and the other those of spring or summer.

Peter Paul Rubens, the great luminary and centre of the Flemish system of art, was of a distinguished family at Antwerp, at that time a school of classical and religious learning, and the emporium of the western world. Here, from his infancy, he was educated, with great care, in every branch of polite literature; and his genius met these advantages with an ardour and success, of which the ordinary course of things furnishes us with no parallel. At the age of nineteen, he seriously applied himself to painting under the tuition of Otho Venius, and, a very few years afterwards, we find him in Italy, possessed of unbounded powers both in the theory and practice of his art, and working more as the rival than the pupil of those masters, whose works had been selected as the objects of his imitation.

Both the number and merits of the works of Rubens, as well as his uncommon success in life, are calculated to excite extraordinary attention: his fame is extended over a large part of the continent without a rival; and it may truly be said that he has enriched his country, not only by the *magnificent examples of art* which he left, but also by what some may deem a more solid advantage, the wealth which continued, till lately, to be drawn into it by the concourse of strangers from all parts of the world to view them.

To the city of Dusseldorp he has been an equal benefactor, as the celebrated gallery there would at least lose half its value, were his performances alone to be withdrawn from it. Paris, also, owes to him a large part of its attractions; and, if to these we add the many towns, churches, and private cabinets, whereon a single picture or sketch of Rubens often confers distinction, who shall dispute his legitimate claim to be ranked with the most illustrious names in his profession?

Rubens is not one of those regular and timid composers, who escape censure and deserve no praise. He produces no faultless monsters; his works abound with defects, as well as beauties, and are liable by their daring eccentricities, to provoke much criticism. But they have, nevertheless, that peculiar property, always the companion of true genius, that which seizes on

the spectator, commands attention, and enforces admiration in spite of all their faults. "To the want of this fascinating power," (says Sir Joshua Reynolds, in his *Journey through Flanders*) "it is owing, that the performances of those painters, by which he is surrounded, such as the altar-pieces of Crayer, Schut, Segers, Huysum, Tyssens, Van Balen, and others, though they have perhaps fewer defects, appear spiritless and insipid in comparison: they are men, whose hands, and indeed all their faculties, appear to be cabined, cribbed, confined; and their performances, however tolerable in some respects, are too evidently the effect of merely careful and laborious diligence."

"The productions of Rubens, on the contrary, seem to flow from his pencil with more than freedom, with *prodigality*; his mind was inexhaustible, his hand was never wearied; the exuberant fertility of his imagination was, therefore, always accompanied by a correspondent spirit in the execution of his work:

'Led by some rule which guides but not constrains,
He finish'd more through happiness than pains.'

No man ever more completely laid the reins on the neck of his inclinations, no man ever more fearlessly abandoned himself to his own sensations, and, depending on them, dared to attempt extraordinary things, than Rubens. To this, in a great measure, must be attributed that perfect originality of manner, by which the limits of the art may be said to be extended. Endowed with a full comprehension of his own character, he waited not a moment for the acquisition of what he perhaps deemed incompatible excellence: his theory once formed, he seldom looked abroad for assistance; there is, consequently, in his works very little that appears to be taken from other masters, and, if he has occasionally stolen any thing, he has so well digested and adapted it to the rest of his composition, that the theft is not discoverable. But, though it must be allowed that he possessed, in many respects, the true art of imitation, though he looked at nature with a true painter's eye, and saw at once the characteristic feature, by which every object is distinguished, and rendered it at once on canvass with a vivacity of touch truly astonishing; though his powers of grouping and combining his objects into a whole, and forming his masses of light and shade, and colour, have never been equalled; and though the general animation and energy of his attitudes, and the flowing liberty of his outline, all contribute to arrest the attention, and inspire a portion of that enthusiasm by which the painter was absorbed and carried away, yet the spectator will at last awake from the trance, his eyes will cease to be dazzled, and then he will not fail to lament, that such extraordinary powers were so often misapplied, if not entirely cast away; he will inquire why Rubens was content to want so many requisites to the perfection of art, why he paid no greater attention to elegance and correctness of form, to grace, beauty, dignity, and propriety of character,—why every subject, of whatever class, is equally adorned with the gay colours of spring, and every figure in his compositions indiscriminately *fed on roses*. Nor will he, I fear, be satisfied with the ingenious, but surely unfounded apology, that these faults harmonize with his style, and were necessary to its complete uniformity; that his taste in design appears to correspond better with his colouring and composition, than if he had adopted a more correct and refined style of drawing; and that perhaps in painting, as in personal attractions, there is a certain agreement and correspondence of

parts in the whole together, which is often more captivating than mere regular beauty.

Lest these remarks should be thought too severe on this illustrious man, I shall extract from the works of the great critic, so often already quoted, his description of the picture of *The Fallen Angels* by Rubens, now in the gallery at Dusseldorp:—"It is impossible," says Sir Joshua Reynolds, "without having seen this picture, to form an adequate idea of the powers of Rubens. He seems here to have given loose to the most capricious imagination in the attitudes and invention of the falling angels who are tumbling

'With hideous ruin and combustion, down
To bottomless perdition.'

"If we consider the fruitfulness of invention discovered in this work, or the skill which is shown in composing such an infinite number of figures, or the art in the distribution of the light and shadow, the freedom and facility with which it seems to be performed, and, what is still more extraordinary, the correctness, and admirable taste of drawing, of foreshortened figures in attitudes the most difficult to execute, we must pronounce this picture to be one of the greatest efforts of genius that ever the art of painting has produced."

His universality is another striking trait in the character of Rubens. In the smallest sketch, the lightness and transparency of his touch and colour, are no less remarkable than the sweeping rapidity and force of his brush in his largest works; and, in all kinds of subjects, he equally keeps up his wonted superiority. His animals, particularly his lions and horses, are so admirable, that it may be said they were never properly, at least poetically, painted but by him; his portraits rank with the best works of those painters who have made that branch of art their sole study; the same may be said of his landscapes; and, though Claude Lorrain finished more neatly, as became a professor in a particular branch, yet there is such an airiness and facility in the landscapes of Rubens, that a painter would as soon wish to be the author of them, as of those of Claude or any other artist whatever.

Rubens, like Titian, was caressed, honoured, employed, and splendidly rewarded by several crowned heads, and even deputed in a ministerial capacity by the king of Spain, to make confidential overtures to the court of London, where he was knighted by Charles I., and had every possible mark of respect shown to him on account of his unrivalled excellence in his profession. At his return to Flanders, he was honoured with the post of secretary of state, and in that office he continued till his death, which was brought on by the gout at the age of sixty-three. He is said to have shown the ruling passion strong in death, lamenting to be taken off just as he began to be able to paint, and understand his art.

He enjoyed his good fortune with equal liberality and prudence, searching out and employing such artists as possessed merit, and were in indigent circumstances; but when visited by a famous chemist, who told him he had nearly discovered the philosopher's stone, and wished him to become a partner in his good luck, Rubens, pointing to his palette and pencils, answered, he was come too late, for that, by the help of those instruments, he had himself found the philosopher's stone twenty years before.

In comparing Rubens with Titian, it has been observed, that the latter mingled his tints as they are in nature, that is, in such a manner as makes

it impossible to discover where they begin or terminate: Rubens's method, on the contrary, was to lay his colours in their places, one by the side of the other, and afterwards very slightly mix them by a touch of the pencil. Now, as it is an acknowledged principle in the art, that the less colours are mingled, the greater their purity and vivacity, and, as every painter knows the latter method to be the most learned (requiring a deeper knowledge of the subject), to be attended with a greater facility, and, if properly managed, with greater truth and vivacity of effect, it must follow that this difference in their practice, which has been adduced to prove the inferiority of Rubens to Titian, indisputably proves the reverse; and though it must be allowed perhaps that, in practice, he at times uncovered too much the skeleton of his system, and rendered his tints too visible for a near inspection, I can have no doubt that, on the whole, he was the most profound theorist; that more may be learnt from him respecting the nature, use, and arrangement of colours, than from any other master; and that, had he not been, in some measure, the dupe of his own powers, his name would have stood first in the first rank of colourists.

Rubens, like other men of his degree of eminence, produced a multitude of scholars and imitators, to whom he stood in the place of nature, and whose excellence can only be measured by their proximity to, or distance from, their great archetype. The best of their works are now probably, and not improperly, attributed to him, from whose mind the principle, that directed them, emanated. From him they learned to weigh the powers of every colour, and balance the proportion of every tint; but destitute of his vigorous imagination, the knowledge of his principle became, in their hands, a mere palliative of mental imbecility (leaves without trunk), and served only to lacquer over poverty of thought and feebleness of design, and to impart a sickly magnificence to stale mythological conceits, and clumsy forms of gods without dignity, goddesses without beauty, and heroes without energy; which disgust the more, for the abortive attempt to conceal by colouring the want of that, which colour can never supply.

Such will always be the success of exclusive endeavours to copy the manner of a particular individual, however great his powers or name. The proper use of the study of our predecessors is to open and enlarge the mind, facilitate our labours, and give us the result of the selection, made by them, of what is grand, beautiful, and striking in nature. A painter, therefore, ought to consider, compare, and weigh in the balance of reason, the different styles of all distinguished masters; and, whatever mode of execution he may choose to adopt, his imitation should always be general, and directed only to what is truly excellent in each: he may follow the same road, but not tread in the same footsteps; otherwise, to borrow a metaphor from a celebrated artist of former days, instead of the child, he will be more likely to become the *grandchild* of nature.

LETTER

ADDRESSED TO THE EDITOR OF "THE TRUE BRITON," ON
THE PROPOSAL FOR ERECTING A PUBLIC MEMORIAL OF
THE NAVAL GLORY OF GREAT BRITAIN.

SIR,

HAVING lately seen by the public papers, that it is in contemplation to erect a column, statue, or other monument, in honour of the British Navy, I trust it cannot be thought unbecoming in any man to offer his sentiments respecting the best mode of carrying so laudable a design into execution, and rendering it at the same time a monument of the good taste of the nation; as I suppose every man must feel, on such an occasion, that whatever, by meanness of conception or clumsiness of execution, is disgraceful to the national taste, must be equally disgraceful to the glorious end in view, and reflect lasting dishonour, instead of credit, on its liberal supporters.

Attention to this point is the more necessary, as the valour and superior dexterity of the British seamen have been felt, admired, and fully acknowledged, by the surrounding nations; but, it must be owned, we have not as yet been equally successful in impressing them with an advantageous opinion of British taste. Some advances, however, within a few years past, have been made, even in this respect; and the attention that has been paid us in consequence, should render us doubly cautious, and rouse us to redoubled energy, that we may not again fall into contempt—contempt, accompanied by insult and derision; for the watchful jealousy already excited by the progress of the arts, since the establishment of the Royal Academy, will not suffer a failure, in an object of so high a kind, to pass in mere silence and neglect.

Being a private individual, without rank, and without influence, I should not have dared to obtrude my thoughts on the public, but that I feel my full share of enthusiasm in the generous cause, and that, my line of study leading me to the immediate consideration of such subjects, I naturally imagined it possible that I might have more ideas rise on the occasion, than could readily offer themselves to every one; but far from presumptuously wishing to dictate to others, I only profess to throw out a few hints for the consideration of those who may have more judgment and taste than myself, and are more particularly engaged in the design; and happy shall I be, and think myself amply rewarded for my trouble, if my conceptions should only be the means of exciting the attention, and drawing forth the ideas, of some one abler to do justice to the sublimity of the subject.

A work like that in question, in addition to durability in the materials,

magnificence in the structure, and taste in the execution, ought to abound in sources of instruction and entertainment; it should be as interesting in itself, as it is, from the nature of its subject, capable of keeping curiosity always alive, and of being viewed with fresh admiration for a thousand years.

A column may at first surprise by its magnitude, and please by its beauty; but the uniformity of its impression on the sight, alike on all sides and at all times, must quickly render it uninteresting; and after a few ages of disregard, posterity may only view it as a quarry of materials for other edifices. A colossal statue might do more, in some respects, than a column, but in magnitude and effect it must be inferior; and the inhospitable climate, by wearing away the sharpness and delicacy of the workmanship, would prevent its being long considered as an object of attention, in point of taste; the ideas suggested by it would be of too refined and abstracted a nature to allow it to be very instructive, and it must at last partake too much of the uniformity of a pillar, to be capable of affording that plenitude and succession of entertainment, which ought always to accompany great durability.

Having shown the insufficiency, in some points, of the plans already proposed, it remains now to consider how all the important and necessary qualities above mentioned can be combined. This, I conceive, may be effected by the adoption of the following scheme, in which the whole powers of the arts of painting, sculpture, and architecture may be united;—and what subject ever offered itself more worthy of such a combination!

What I would recommend, in preference to either a column or a statue, is—*First*, that on some convenient spot in the metropolis, a circular building should be erected, as nearly on the plan of the Pantheon at Rome as the different designation of it will allow, into which the light should be admitted through the dome, at or near the top. *Secondly*, that the whole internal circle should be divided into compartments, on which should be painted a certain number of the most brilliant victories and remarkable achievements, judiciously and carefully selected from the naval history of Great Britain, beginning from the remotest periods, and coming gradually down to the present day. *Thirdly*, that between every two of the pictures, against spaces left for that purpose, there should be placed one or more statues of the size of life, of the greatest heroes of the British Navy who commanded in the actions represented on the adjoining canvasses, and to whose skill and intrepidity the success is chiefly to be attributed: that under the principal paintings there should be a smaller set, relative to our trade, commerce, colonization, discoveries, and other subjects connected with, and growing out of, the great power and prosperity of our Navy. *Fourthly*, that over the whole should be hung a series of half-length portraits of other great men and gallant officers, who, though not of the first class, have deserved well of their country. As this circle will be large, some space in it may be reserved for future claimants, yet perhaps unborn, who will not, we have every reason to hope, add less to the honour of their country, nor fall short of the celebrity of their glorious predecessors. *Fifthly*, that in the centre of the building, under the dome, there be placed a colossal group in marble, representing Neptune doing homage to Britannia; and at the head of the room, a statue of His present Majesty George the Third, in whose reign the British naval power has reached a point of exaltation, which seems to preclude the possibility of its being carried much higher by our successors.

I pretend not, nor indeed is this the time or place, to enter into the detail ; on that the architect, the painter, and the sculptor, must be consulted ; and happily the Royal Academy can supply, not one only, but many, in each department of art, of ability fully equal to the great end proposed. It is sufficient here to remark, that *simplicity* and *grandeur* should be the leading characteristics of the building and its decorations, both within and without. What an effect might a design like this, happily planned and executed, produce ! How magnificent, how instructive it might be made ! How entertaining to trace down from the earliest records of our history, the gradual increase of our navy ! to remark the different stages of its growth, from a few simple canoes in its infancy to the stupendous magnitude of a hundred first-rate men of war ! miracles of the mechanic arts, proudly bearing Britain's thunder ! the bulwark of England ! the glory of Englishmen, and the terror and admiration of the world ! How flattering to the imagination to anticipate the pleasure of walking round such an edifice, and surveying the different subjects depicted on its walls ! Battles, under all the varied circumstances of day, night, moon-light, storm, and calm !—the effects of fire, water, wind, and smoke, mingled in terrific confusion ! In the midst, British Valour triumphantly bearing down all opposition, accompanied by Humanity, equally daring and ready to succour the vanquished foe ! Discoveries, in which we see delineated the strange figures, and still stranger costume, of nations till then unknown, and where the face of Nature itself is exhibited under a new and surprising aspect. Then to turn and behold the statues and portraits of the enterprising commanders and leaders in the actions and expeditions recorded, and compare their different countenances ; here a Drake and an Anson ! there a Blake, a Hawke, a Boscawen, and a Cook !

In such a place, what man, or description of men, can fail to be interested ? The philosopher, the man of genius, the man of taste, the naturalist, the physiognomist, the soldier as well as the sailor ; in short, all conditions might resort here for study, or for amusement. Age might here find subject for pleasing meditation, and here youth might imbibe virtuous enthusiasm.

What a noble field for honourable contention would also be opened, by such an undertaking, to our artists of all denominations ; and what might not be expected from their exertions, when equally operated upon by patriotism, grandeur and celebrity of subject, and personal emulation, who now produce so much, almost without encouragement, and without notice !

It is indeed the opinion of many persons of the highest consideration, that nothing but an opportunity of this kind is wanting, to enable them to rise as superior to the justly admired schools of Italy and Flanders, in the execution of their works, as they confessedly are already in the choice and composition of their subjects. If so, what would any of the boasted galleries and collections have to offer in comparison of such an assemblage as is here proposed ? and how deeply are not the policy and interest, as well as the honour, of the nation engaged in the furtherance of such a design !

I have been encouraged, Sir, to trouble you thus far with my sentiments, by the advice of several individuals of acknowledged judgment and taste, who are convinced, as well as myself, that no plan truly efficient and honourable in all points of view can be adopted, that partakes not in a great degree of what I have now proposed, which is of a nature so powerfully and generally interesting, that I doubt not it might be carried into effect to great advantage as a pecuniary speculation merely. The public exhibition, with the publica-

tion of a set of engravings of the work, would probably pay the expense of the whole, with considerable interest; and the nation would derive the benefit from it of being greatly enriched, at the same time that the rapid dispersion of the prints into all quarters of the globe, would contribute, more than can well be imagined or described, to give an exalted and universal impression of British valour, taste, munificence, and genius.

I am, Sir, with great respect,

JOHN OPIE.

